

TO WAKE ISLAND AND BEYOND *REMINISCENCES*



by
Brigadier General Woodrow M. Kessler
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)

Occasional Paper

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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The Problems of U S Marine Corps Prisoners of War in Korea James Angus MacDonald, Jr 1988 295 pp A thesis prepared for a graduate-level degree in 1961 at the University of Maryland, this study has had a remarkable influence on official policies regarding prisoners of war since it was written. It is published for the use of the serious student of the POW experience.

John Archer Lejeune, 1869-1942, Register of His Personal Papers Lieutenant Colonel Merrill L Bartlett, USMC (Ret) 1988 123 pp Covers some of the more than 6,600 documents of the Lejeune Papers in the Library of Congress, photocopied for the Marine Corps Historical Center, and a small collection of related items donated to the Center. Correspondence of the Thirteenth Commandant is explored with particular reference to the nine years of his commandancy, which "remain the least known and appreciated of his accomplishments." Includes biographical sketch.

Foreword

The History and Museums Division has undertaken the publication for limited distribution of various studies, theses, compilations, bibliographies, and monographs, as well as proceedings at selected workshops, seminars, symposia, and similar colloquia, which it considers to be of significant value for audiences interested in Marine Corps history. These "Occasional Papers," which are chosen for their intrinsic worth, must reflect structured research, present a contribution to historical knowledge not readily available in published sources, and reflect original content on the part of the author, compiler, or editor. It is the intent of the division that these occasional papers be distributed to selected institutions, such as service schools, official Department of Defense historical agencies, and directly concerned Marine Corps organizations, so the information contained therein will be available for study and exploitation.

This interesting memoir of Brigadier General Woodrow M. Kessler's service during World War II was sent to me in February of this year. Almost immediately, it was the consensus of opinion of the historians who read it that we should publish it as an occasional paper. As an added bonus to later readers, we all agreed that it should be published in its original format. General Kessler's calligraphy is so legible and unusual in these days that it was apparent that a typed version of the manuscript would lose a significant personal touch.

As he notes, General Kessler enlisted in the Navy in 1931 after graduating from high school in Massachusetts. After nine months' sea service on board the battleship *Wyoming*, he was accepted for transfer to the Naval Academy Preparatory School at Hampton Roads, Virginia, and became a midshipman at Annapolis in July 1933, a member of the class of 1937. Impressed by the demeanor of a Marine officer English instructor at the Naval Academy, Kessler opted for service in the Marine Corps after graduation. He reported to the Basic School at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, finished his training, and asked for the new Base Defense Weapons Course at Quantico, Virginia, a school which "sounded like a coming thing for an ambitious young officer, something different." He was accepted and became a member of the class of 1940. When he graduated he reported to the 1st Defense Battalion at San Diego and was assigned as a lieutenant to be commander of Battery B, a unit of 5-inch naval guns.

Shipped out to Pearl Harbor early in 1941, Kessler's battalion was used in detachments to provide the initial garrisons at Palmyra, Johnston, and Midway Islands and, subsequently, Wake Island. The story of his experience on

Wake Island in helping set up its meager defenses, his involvement in the battle, and his experiences as a Japanese prisoner of war constitute the bulk of his memoir. As he notes in conclusion, he and his fellow Marines "had done their best when we had the opportunity."

Awarded the Legion of Merit for combat leadership at Wake, General Kessler attended the Senior Officers Course at Quantico in 1946, served in Korea as Executive Officer, 7th Marines and Commanding Officer, 1st Service Battalion, and finished his active duty career at Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Training Command, Atlantic Fleet, at Little Creek, Virginia, in 1955.

The memoir which General Kessler authored is one that gives a vivid and highly readable account of important events in Marine Corps history. We have published it exactly as it was written and have made no attempt to do any, in our opinion, unwarranted editing. The opinions and facts represented in this publication are the author's, and do not necessarily represent those of the Marine Corps or the Department of the Navy. In pursuit of accuracy and objectivity, the History and Museums Division welcomes comments on this publication from interested individuals and activities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "E. H. Simmons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

EDWIN H. SIMMONS
Brigadier General, U S Marine Corps (Retired)
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

To Wake Island and Beyond

Reminiscences

Donald Milton Kessler
Brig. Gen., U.S.M.C. (ret.)

Although I have not made precise research into the origins of the men who formed the first Defense Battalion, it seems that over ninety percent of them came from the West. I cannot recall any other than myself who grew up in the hills of New England. I was born a Hoosier but did most of my growing up in Yankee country.

I graduated from high school in 1930 during the Great Depression. There were no jobs (Mr. Donalds was non-existent) for a sixteen year old. The U. S. Navy seemed like a golden opportunity to end the misery of unemployment and, at the same time, find some adventure. I was a high school graduate with credits in trigonometry, solid geometry, physics, chemistry, latin, French, algebra, etc. Yet I was required to compete by examination with others who also wanted to enlist for twenty-one dollars a month, plus a hammock and beans.

The U. S. Navy accepted me for enlistment 15 October, 1931.

Those of us who arrived at Naval Training Station, Newport, R. I. with very little pocket money and a tobacco habit soon learned the miseries of a nicotine withdrawal. (I had never heard of marijuana.) Bull Durham, roll your own, was only a nickel a bag with rice paper a part of the package, but that low price didn't help if you didn't have a nickel. Those who did have a nickel received much attention from the beggars watching hungrily for "seconds" or "thirds" on the soggy butt. We weren't paid anything of our \$21⁰⁰ a month until a month had passed and then only about \$3⁰⁰ for soap, razor blades, etc. It was said that the remainder would be for payment of a tailor bill for alteration of our blue and dress white uniforms the latter of which I never had occasion to wear. One would think that under the circumstances, the most rational thing would have been to quit tobacco entirely. However, as I was to learn again as a prisoner of war, tobacco provides the greatest comfort when you are cold and hungry. Later, under conditions of relative comfort, I was able to shake the habit.

On New Year's Day 1932 I became a member of the crew of the U.S.S. Wyoming.

The days of the wooden ships were gone, except for heavy wooden topside decks glistening white after holystoning with salt water (we were told we would rip them up prior to action with an enemy, and I've often wondered if they got around to it before 7 December 1941,) but the iron men remained. We served both the 3" anti-aircraft and the 5" broadside guns in the 1st Division, sometimes I was a loader, at others a pointer or trainer. The noise of firing either gun, particularly the 3", was severe. Yet we prided ourselves on our ability to withstand the noise without protecting our ears. At times, when the firing was expected to be prolonged, we would unobtrusively stuff a small wad of cotton in our ears. At the end of a day of target practice, one's head would feel swollen and the ears ringing. It wasn't until years later when I became aware of a considerable nerve deafness that the penalty for our "iron man" posture became evident.

After I had arrived aboard the U.S.S. Wyoming, I put in an application to be considered for the U.S. Naval Academy. In the fall of 1932 I had completed nine months sea service and was eligible for transfer to the Naval Academy Preparatory Class at Hampton

Roads. There were difficulties in getting the all-powerful ship's yeoman to cut my orders; fortunately a young reserve officer, Ensign Cross, the ship's Education Officer, took my side in the battle and I received a rail ticket from Philadelphia to Baltimore, and from thence by overnight ferry boat to Norfolk. Apparently the boat transportation to Norfolk was less expensive for the government and my time was not very important. My allowance for meals did not allow for the extravagance of dinner on the boat. The cheapest item on the menu was oyster stew. There were only four oysters in the stew but a large glob of butter coated on the surface. I filled up on buttered crackers.

The time spent at the Naval Academy Prep Class was largely concerned with becoming acquainted with the usual format and material of the Naval Academy entrance exams. It was of little benefit in understanding the life of a naval officer but did provide some interesting side lights on the times. It was the middle of the Great Depression.

As an economy measure in the winter the heat was turned on for only two hours a day. We studied with blankets wrapped around our heavy pea coats.

To conserve electricity, lights were turned off at 2:00 (9 A.M.) and so little extra time could be spent on studying. We couldn't afford flash lights. Our pay was cut fifteen percent from 36^{00} per month to 30^{60} . Inasmuch as the Naval Academy required a deposit of 150^{00} on entry to partially pay for books and uniforms, all but five dollars of the monthly pay was withheld to accumulate for the entry fee.

Meanwhile at the mess hall our best meals were creamed corn; chicken necks, wings and skin; with starch pudding for a dessert. We complained to our school officers, some of whom as officer-of-the-day were supposedly served the same rations. But we were never given a reason for the poor menu. Even on "depression" rations we had all eaten better aboard ship. My weight dropped from a trim 162 to a weak 145 pounds. On Saturday nights some of us would go to Norfolk, to a Chinese restaurant where for fifty cents a piece we were served enormous platters of rice. We gorged on rice soaked in soy sauce. Later, as a P.O.W., I was to recall those rice platters with longing. And from the experience I learned to later as an officer inspect the actual food of the men and not just what was given me

as a sample.

I entered the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland on 6 July, 1933. Life there was typical of the stories written about it, particularly the hazing. It was said of a naval officer who didn't shape up; "he didn't have a plebe year", implying that he had been inadequately hardened by hazing. And so every effort was made by the upper classes to ensure a properly hazed plebe class. It is true that hardships endured provide a base for future self-sacrifice in times of peril, but the effect of hazing was less fortunate on the hazer who often never matured from that childish form of leadership.

During my second class (junior) year, my English instructor was a Marine officer, a Captain Jordan. His man-to-man approach to midshipmen was most refreshing. He invited me to his home on Saturday afternoons to listen on the radio to football games. He was such "real people" that I later brought along my friends "Jeb" Stuart and "Webb" Smith. We were so impressed that we all decided to go for the Marines.

We graduated 3 June 1937; the Commandant of the Marine Corps, then known as the Major General Commandant, Tommy Holcomb, came down to Annapolis to personally swear us in as commissioned officers. We reported to the Basic School at the Philadelphia Navy Yard where we learned to drill Troops like a Parris Island drill instructor. The troops were ourselves. We learned to fire Expert with both the Springfield rifle and the .45 caliber automatic pistol, to disassemble and reassemble a Browning machine gun while blindfolded. We studied tactics under Louis (Chesty) Puller, whose most impressive lesson came one day in a class on Small Wars when Louis intoned in a deep guttural, "When you occupy a native village, you provide security; the first thing to do is put a machine gun in the church steeple." He was well respected for his down-to-earth no-book classes. We became aware of the fine points of Naval Law, far better than at the U.S.N.A. Marine officers at that time were expected to be the lawyers of the naval service.

We went to Indiantown Gap in the mountains north of Harrisburg in November (when the Army would rather not be there) to put into field practice our boot learning, to stumble through the wilderness following a compass course on a moonless, stormy night; to throw hand grenades in a blizzard; and to make a deliciously hard product of the local cider mills by stowing it at the proper distance from the glowing wood stoves in our barracks.

I had heard from some of the previous year's crop of second lieutenants of a newly organized school at Quantico. It was known as the Base Defense Weapons Course. It sounded like a coming thing for an ambitious young officer, something different. My application was approved.

The class had been organized only about a month when it became apparent that although the Navy/Service was conscious of the need for defending advance bases, there was no concrete plan of how it was to be done, nor was it firmly established as to what weapons might be provided. It was quite obvious that the 3-inch anti-aircraft guns with height finders and directors (an neanderthal computer that must have been inspired by

Rube Goldberg) would provide ground to air defense against high-flying aircraft. They were most effective at about 10,000 feet altitude. There were some rumors that they would eventually be supplanted by 90mm. guns. These guns were considered mobile; they could be emplaced for firing without being embedded in concrete. We were catechized on the mechanical functioning of the directors. We were required to memorize the names of the individual parts and the relationships between them. Without ever having actually disassembled and assembled an actual director our book learning was supposedly so thorough that should we be confronted with a recalcitrant director on Crusoe Island, we would be able to correct it while blindfolded, one hand tied behind, at midnight high tide. We learned the complicated but very artificial methods of computing the results of firing target practice at a towed sleeve. Almost half our time was devoted to study and actual firing of the 75mm. Pack Howitzer. We became thoroughly competent in every aspect of 75mm. gunnery, even to spotting fire while observing in an open cockpit airplane. Since the Pack Howitzer was designed to be broken down as a pack on the back of a horse,

We spent hours every week learning horsemanship. None of us ever found a 75mm. Pack Howitzer on Wake Island, much less a horse.

We did have some instruction related to the 5"-51 caliber naval broadside gun, but no guns. The fire control procedures were those used by the U.S. Coast Artillery on a huge plotting board and well suited to action against ships related to the Monitor and Merrimac type. At the end of the course we went to Parris Island and Hilton Head (the alligator bogs were yet to be converted to condominiums and tennis courts) to train with and fire both the 3" AA and the 75mm. Pack Howitzer. We were shown 5"-51 cal. guns emplaced with sandbag protective enclosures that would have been ineffective against anything larger than a .50 cal. bullet.

At Quantico we were involved in large scale paper tactical problems with the Junior and Senior Courses of the Marine Corps Schools. In these paper problems we were usually given assignments related to 75mm. and 155mm. howitzers. The more senior officers in the other courses were given command of infantry units to which our artillery was usually attached so that we had no real

control but acted as advisors and largely disregarded. Many of the problems were attack oriented rather than defensive. Some of the difficulties encountered as late as 1944 in landing operations envisaged in the Tentative Landing Operations Manual are set forth on page 21 of Vol. 2 of History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II. Since Marines were attack oriented, concepts as to defense of a base were greatly subordinated to those of acquiring it.

In relating these circumstances of our training for base defense, the irrelevancies and lack of equipment and facilities for realistic training, I do not suggest that they were a peculiarity of the Marine Corps. It must be remembered that this was the culmination of years of poverty budgets for the military. The U.S. Army was training with broomsticks for rifles and cavalry was contending with tanks for priorities despite the Blitzkrieg in Europe. Horses were cheap. At Quantico we got the feel of driving a tank by manipulating the controls of a farm tractor. Our failure to properly train in weapons most suited to a realistic future role resulted not from any lack of imagination, intelligence or foresight on the part of the military but rather from the uncertainties

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of appropriations from a pacifist oriented society and Congress. The men in the military were far above average; the Great Depression had made the service a desirable occupation and the services were able to pick and choose only the best.

Several of the class of 1940 of the Base Defense Weapons Course (Lewis, Barninger, Roe, Kessler, Adelman) were transferred to the 1st Defense Battalion at San Diego. We arrived in July and all but Lewis were assigned to the 5"-51 cal. group, the weapon in which we had least school preparation. Lewis went to the 3" AA. Shortly after our assignment, the 5"-51 cal. guns began to arrive. I was given command of Battery "B"; Barninger and Adelman were given (by virtue of their lack of seniority) secondary positions under Roe and Heles who commanded Batteries A & C. The task of assembling and mounting the guns was accomplished by much trial and error, utilizing jury rigged slings and cherry pickers. I gave as much time as possible to devising a system of fire control using the Navy's Ford Rangekeeper (a clockwork mechanism, the progenitor of modern computers.) For the times, it was a complicated

device by which the operator began the problem with announced estimates of target speed, direction and course. The range was cranked in by an operator who received telephoned readings from an old cumbersome coincidence type rangefinder. After firing began, spotter's corrections were cranked in until at least the true target course, speed and range were determined and firing could proceed with accuracy, — unless, of course, the wily enemy changed course and speed. An elaborate (for the times) telephone network was required between operators at the director and, sources of information, and the guns. Obviously, if the telephone wires were not adequately buried, there were multiple opportunities for enemy fire to disrupt the flow of information.

I spent much time training the men assigned to this fire control as a team, preparing them for all possible exigencies. When we finally landed at Wake Island and were organized into 5" batteries, "A", "B" and "L" there, the 5" personnel were divided up among the three battery positions. I found that few of my well drilled team were still assigned to "B" battery. Of all my senior NCO's only Platoon Sergeant Huffman was

assigned to "B" battery on Wake Island. The others were strangers to me and we had little opportunity to train as a team. Fueling B-17's had priority from Pearl Harbor. The T.O. called for two officers to each battery. (The U.S. Army provided four officers for a similar unit.) At San Diego and Pearl Harbor, 2nd Lt. John McWhister had been my range officer. At Wake Island he was assigned, because of our personnel shortage, to command the "L" battery on Wilkes, and so Sergeant Huffman became my exec while I ran the range station, acted as spotter, and managed the overall direction of the battery. Some unusual splicing of duties became necessary.

At San Diego, until February 1941, the 1st Defense Battalion became a well-organized unit. It would have been capable of providing decisive defense of any small island when properly reinforced by infantry and tanks. Unfortunately we were shipped out to Pearl Harbor early in 1941 in increments and never again were in one place at the same time. Detachments were sent to Palmyra, Johnston, and Midway Islands and an irregular system of sending relief groups made the 1st Defense Battalion a replacement unit.

Battery unit was lost.

It was becoming obvious that we were entering more tense times and that family separations would become increasingly frequent. To insure my being able to send my wife a message whatever the circumstances, I devised a system of encryption and acquainted her with it. Little did I anticipate how this message system would be used.

In July 1941 I was ordered with a group of about 200 men and officers to relieve a part of the 3^d Defense Battalion on Midway Island. The guns of that unit had been emplaced and sand bagged. Ammunition magazines had been built at each position and the defense was organized according to established principles of the time. Our training time was reduced somewhat by the need to bury the many dead Gooney (albatross) birds whose decaying carcasses provided sustenance to swarms of buzzing flies. I remember Midway best for the scouting trip six of us took aboard a submarine; I think it was the U.S.S. Perch. We were to investigate the possibility of Jap presence on the tiny island of Kure, also known as Ocean Island, some distance to the west of Midway.

It was a fantastic adventure to a storybook desert island. The waters around Kure were so clear that one could look down through 75 to 100 feet to the sandy bottom and see all the sea life, including sharks, swimming about. We went over the reef in a small flat-bottomed boat powered by an outboard motor. As we approached the beach, what had appeared to be logs lying on the beach became sea lions basking in the sun, oblivious of any threat by humans.

The only evidence of human trespass was a collapsed wooden keg set upon a tripod, apparently left on the island many years before by a humanitarian mission intent on providing a cache of fresh water for any unfortunate castaway. The water had long since disappeared. The only water available by digging was extremely brackish and undrinkable. The beach sand was so very fine that walking was difficult, and then there were the constant dive attacks by anxious terns that nested on the beach. We walked in the shallow water under which the sand was more firm.

Along the way around the island we encountered a

great variety of sea life, including large turtles. The frigate birds, black angular buzzard shapes, gazed ominously from their perches in the scrub magnolia that rimmed the beach. Along the high water mark we found glass fishing floats long since broken away from Japanese fishing nets. I still have one of these, over 12" in diameter, a souvenir of a dream like excursion to another world. It was my only evidence of a Japanese advance to the east until December 8th (Wake Island time.)

Our tour at Midway ended early in September and we embarked in a cruiser for a return to Pearl Harbor. We enjoyed about six weeks of paradise, during which time we drilled and fired target practice at night off the beach at Fort Kamehameha near Hickam Field. I also was ordered aboard a cruiser to observe a night firing problem employing radar. Evidently someone believed that radar was in our future.

In October of 1941, some 200 of us were ordered to Wake Island to augment the forces there and to provide for rotation of others. Before we departed Pearl Harbor I learned that although the guns of "B" battery were emplaced, there was no other defensive construction

completed and no rangefinder. The prospect was that we were to go out there and that later a rangefinder would be sent out. We had our own equipment at our barracks in Pearl Harbor but I was told that it was destined for elsewhere, presumably Palmyra or Johnston Islands. Apparently Wake was not considered to be a permanent assignment for the 1st Defense Battalion and therefore our equipment could not go there. I sent some scouts out through the naval base to see if there was a stray rangefinder about. Fortunately we found an old navy C.P.O. in charge of one of the gun sheds. For a consideration (which I've now forgotten the amount or kind) we were given an old Model 1911 coincidence type rangefinder (about 20 feet long) which had been removed from a decommissioned ship. It survived the voyage to Wake.

We arrived at Wake Island on 2 November 1941 on (the Navy word is "in") the U.S.S. Castor. The island was an uninviting low lying atoll, difficult to visualize from the deck of the transport. The water tower (about 50 feet high) was the most significant evidence of human habitation. There were no docks extending out into the water from Wake. There was no harbor although eventually there was to be a clearing of the channel into the lagoon.

The cargo was offloaded onto lighters which were then pulled by lines attached to tractors, one on either side of the channel, to a point just inside the lagoon. A small dock had been constructed there. It was hard to think of Wake as being the top of a volcano. Its maximum height above water was 21 feet. Seeing it from the deck of the ship was much like seeing an oasis in the desert, but much less inviting when you knew what was actually there.

The air was oppressively moist, even in October. As I looked at the shoreline, trying to identify objects of comforting familiarity, there was nothing but sand, rocks, low bushes, the breaking surf and sea birds. It was somewhat as I must have been for a replacement troop of cavalry after having travelled across plains and desert of the Southwest to finally come upon the isolated fort set up in Apache country.

The Marine camp, Camp #1, was a tent city of pyramidal tents set up near wooden improvisations that served as headquarters and the mess hall. Latrines and showers were extremely primitive. Officers

were assigned two to a tent. I was bunking with 2^d Lt. John A. McAlister whom I had met when I took command of "B" battery in San Diego. We had stayed together from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, to Midway, and now to Wake Island. But on Wake, Johnny Mac was given command of his own 5" battery, "L" on Wilkes Island, while I was given command of the 5" battery on Peale Island. "Barney" Bangerer commanded the third 5" battery at Peacock Point.

In spite of our separate commands and the natural competitive rivalry that usually exists between closely associated similar units, Johnny Mac and I remained very good friends from the beginning and through our incarceration as guests of the Mikado. His home was Blue Mountain, Mississippi, a fact which when stated elicited a chuckle even from him. He was about 5'9" in stature, thin and wiry, blond and blue eyed, one of which would get a bit lazy after an occasional tiring night of whiskey and poker. He was of the mold that has provided fighting men of our country from the days of the early settlers, through the Revolution, to the present. Of course, in the Civil War his family were Confederates and Johnny

Mac always considered the outcome of that struggle to have been a moral victory for the South, considering the relative size of the contending forces. His pride in the Confederate exploits never diminished his loyalty and soldierly fidelity to the U.S. Marines. He would have been a good soldier in any army. He was the kind of man that made the U.S. Marines the dependable fighting force that it was, and is. He wasn't big, didn't swagger or strut, not obscene in language or deportment, a kind of Southern Baptist but not a church goer, but one who could be depended upon to support and help his mates to the end. Not big enough to overwhelm the opposition in a barroom brawl, yet tenacious enough to make them decide to call it quits. You could respect him and be glad he was on your side; I had a sense that the feeling was mutual even though in his eye I had been contaminated by my Yankee upbringing. We frequently worked together on Wakte on the many non-defense assignments that the Marines were called upon to perform, such as unloading airplane bombs from the lighters to the dock and then to the magazines, unloading and storing airplane gasoline,

fueling B-17's, etc. (At least they were non-defense from our perspective, Steve's work.)

There was a never ending need to perform a guard duty that was particularly tiring because of the wide dispersal of sentry posts. There were duties in connection with coding and decoding of messages, most of which related to weather conditions over the Netherlands East Indies; just another service performed for the Army Air Corps.

When we found opportunity to gather a few of our battery personnel, we would go out to the gun positions to fill sand bags and otherwise improve the defensive positions. But the results were minimal. We could get little material to work with. I requested lumber with which to build a temporary magazine for 5" ammunition and was turned down because all lumber was reserved for construction of the naval air base barracks and administrative buildings. We could not get trucks, bulldozers, tractors; we were forced to do any excavating with pick and shovel. The coral was hard. The grand plans for defense battalion installation called for reinforced concrete revetments and concrete shelters

and magazines. We were restricted in the quantities of sand bags and tar paper used to protect storage areas from the frequent rains. There was no barbed wire available; it was just as well, we wouldn't have had the time and manpower to erect it.

In November, Major Devereux called a meeting of the officers at which he told us he had a communication from Pearl Harbor which we were to treat as very confidential. (That was in the days before "Ultra Top Secret.") It was, "International situation indicates you should be on alert." How were we to be on alert? About all we could do would be to be ready to move to battle stations on short notice; a difficult problem when half the men were pumping gasoline and the other half were stevedores aboard a ship or at the dock. If we were to be on alert, why did Pearl send us a garbage truck instead of a radar? And why would Pearl authorize use of neither labor nor construction materials for development of our defenses? It didn't seem as though they really meant their own message.

And we were hungry. We were subsisting on a standard daily ration allowance of about sixty cents per man while

we were engaged in hard physical labor. On the mainland the allowance was sufficient but the "iron" canned rations were more expensive than the fresh produce we couldn't get. Finally we decided to augment ourarder with fish from the sea about us. One Sunday, Barney Banger, Wally Lewis and I went out past the reef off Peacock Point in a motor launch to fish for tuna and wahoo. It was an exciting and rewarding expedition. The waves off Peacock were heavy and the sharks were greedy. It was a struggle to haul in a catch and boat it before a hungry shark left only a tuna head for all the trouble. But in spite of waves and sharks we returned to camp with a good supply of fish, welcomed as much by the hard pressed cooks as by the hungry marines. Other groups also continued this augmentation of our rations.

Gunner Hamas was an old time Marine. He had served in the Austrian Army in World War I, been captured by the Italians, then joined a brigade fighting for the independence of Czechoslovakia. After the war he came to the United States and joined the U.S. Marines. The men looked on him as something of a father figure, a great burly Santa Claus without the beard. He spoke six languages.

Later, as a POW, he provided me much assistance in my studies of the Russian language. I had only a Chinese textbook in Russian for guidance; Big John Hymas provided the English translation. He was not quite as big as his tent mate, Gunner McKinstry, who was about 6 feet 4 inches and 260 pounds, barrel chested and quick on his feet. (This was before the days of steroids.)

Sometimes when he walked through a doorway, he would kick backward to touch the lintel with his foot, demonstrating an amazing flexibility for a man so big.

Big John Hymas was determined to set everything a right, to correct any injustice; he was serious, sometimes almost quixotically moralistic, and an experimenter. He had an idea that he might solve our problem of lack of fresh vegetables by hydroponics. His experiment never got a fair chance; it was interrupted by Japanese bombs. His tent mate, McKinstry, was of another mold, big as it was.

McKinstry learned early in life to fend for himself. He was quick to learn and never forgot a favor or a hurt. He never used his size to overwhelm when he could more easily win with his broad smile and ready laugh. He was a wizard with cards; would give you the deck to

shuffle and then deal out according to your wish, a full house, three aces or a flush; sometimes five aces if he wanted to really impress. His skill manipulating the cards was well known and yet nobody objected to his sitting in a poker game; they trusted him not to cheat. Yet, he invariably came out a winner. This was attributed to his knowledge of and skill in playing the odds rather than in any fast finger work. He was a card-counter long before the media popularized the term. Everyone trusted Big Mac.

But Big Mac grew tired of Big John's fantasies and experiments and, worse, his trying to involve McKinstry in his schemes. And then, more recently (McKinstry complained to Johnny Mac and me) Big John had become obsessed with the belief that there was buried treasure on the island. He talked about it constantly. McKinstry was annoyed. He hit on a scheme to quash his fantasies. McKinster got a piece of parchment from the civilian contractor's draftsman, McKinstry got a piece of old skin like that used in alligator raincoats of the 1930's, and I provided my artistic talents in drawing on the parchment a treasure map of Wake, indicating by an "X" the location of treasure in an area in which we knew

Hamas was working at the time. I supplemented the "X" with my concept of Japanese Katakana. Then I browned the edges of the parchment by burning it irregularly and then aged the document by rubbing with powdered pumice. McKinstry wrapped the map in the oil skin and the next day recruited one of the men who was digging defenses at Hamas' site to "find" it under a large piece of coral. Hamas was elated. He offered to translate the Japanese (not one of his six tongues) for a share of the findings. He would reveal for the time being that my Katakana spelled out "Gateway." The plotting and planning went on; McKinstry was invited into his deal on condition that he would wield a pick and shovel too. McKinstry reported this development to us, lamenting with a twinkle in his eye that he had gotten himself involved in physical labor. But then McKinstry could no longer contain his sense of merriment. He told a senior officer who had previously served with Hamas and could not allow him to be so duped. He sent word to us to knock it off and then informed Hamas. That evening Big John gave us all a tongue lashing which we were forced to accept. We had it coming to us. Then he laughed at the idea of how he had been taken in. He didn't hold grudges.

McKinsley never ceased to find ways to pull practical jokes on Big John even though they continued to buddy and live together in prisoner of war camp. Hamas had a big heart to go with his big body. He easily forgave McKinsley all the practical jokes and even related the stories to others with a chuckle.

I've often wondered if after they took over Wake Island, the Japs found the treasure map in Hamas' tent and were able to locate the buried gold through the medium of my creative katakana.

Captain Platt enjoyed listening with Doc "Bus" Kahn to his classical records. One of their favorites was the Mikado. After the fighting had ended on Wake, Kahn sent Platt a message inquiring as to how he liked the Mikado now. He later wondered out loud what the Jap reaction would have been had they intercepted that note.

Doc Kahn had been a dermatologist in civilian practice. Now, as a naval reserve physician, he was called upon to perform extensive deep body surgery of all kinds. He spent hours studying an old anatomy book he had found, drawing and redrawing the illustrations so as to fix the details in his mind. All hands felt that we had a most competent doctor who could work with a minimum of medical

tool and drugs.

The Pacific islands were noted as a treasure trove of exotic sea shells, but we had little opportunity to look for shells. Finally, Baringer, Lewis and I decided, if we couldn't get time to look during daylight hours, we'd go looking during the next low tide at night. And so, about 2300 we were out wading on the reef off the southern coast of Wilkes. The reef we had seen from a distance during the day became a completely different world of jagged rocks, sloping into shelving that formed shallow pools of water left behind by the ebb tide. The sparkle of our flashlights only added to the eerie perspective of the angular shapes, casting long shadows into the unexplored basins beyond. Now and then the silence was broken by the sudden frenzied lashing about of a large moray eel, its repose in one of the pools disturbed by the beam of a flashlight. We were careful where we stepped. Our search was rewarded only by a few medium sized shells. A few hermit crabs scuttled about on the beach in their adopted homes, but never did I see one of the pack rats that were reputed to be so prevalent on Wake Island. I had heard of their sagacity and skill at overcoming the attempts of man to protect his

supplies from their voracious appetites but I never had a personal experience with any.

There were many such bits of activity to break the boredom of day in and out stereotyped work. The whole period of November 2 to December 6 is a gray blend after nearly 35 years. Of course, we tended to think of ourselves as only "temporary" on Wake. It was not assigned as a primary responsibility of the 1st Defense Battalion. Just as we had been sent to Midway to provide the 3^d Defense Battalion a period of R & R so now did we feel that sometime around Christmas we would be rotated back to Hawaii and then eventually to regular stations at Palmyra and Johnston Islands, neither of which we had yet seen. We were anxious to quit all this substitute work and get on with our assignment. Of course, like Marines ever were, we took whatever job we were given and did our best with it.

Upon my arrival at Wake, I was assigned command of "B" Battery; my first inspection was a disappointment. Contrary to reports I've since read, it was far from ready. The two guns were in place, bolted to a criss-cross of huge timbers (about 8" x 8" x 12' as best I can recall) which were buried in the coral sand. I am sure that whoever had accomplished this task, considering the meager amount of equipment available,

must have felt entitled to a medal for that feat alone. The guns were not mobile, unless you consider a house to be mobile. Around the guns was an unfinished circular wall of sandbags about two feet high. The Ford fire control director had been positioned but was unprotected; there were no ammunition magazines, no rangefinder, and telephone wires had been run, buried about 3", between positions. And there were wires laid over the ground surface from the director position to Battery "D", anti-aircraft, and to the island command. As time went by the lines to island command were frequently cut, repaired, rerouted and changed to the extent we were never sure who would come on when we rang up. Later on, when we made reports or requests by phone, it was uncertain whether the replies were coming from the island commander, Cunningham, or the defense commander, Devereux.

A word here as to the selection of the location of the battery. Although it was ideal for reaching out to sea for maximum range, it was not good for fire direction. It was as far toward the tip of Peale Island as was possible. There was the imprint in the coral sand of a roadway which ran to Toki Point, and this road ran between the guns and the director. The director position was necessarily the CP

and the OP since there was no other officer to direct the operation of the director, the rangefinder, to spot and correct fall of shot with respect to the target, and to oversee all communications. In standard practice, the location of the director did not dictate the location of the battery commander who took a position where he could best observe all battery functions and also spot the splashes, making corrections as necessary to bring the fall of shot on target. The position of the guns, I believe, had been decided by the staff of the CO, Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor (possibly Major Peffrey or Roberts) and approved by Colonel Pickett. Since the guns had an effective range of about 10,000 yards, the difference of a few hundred yards reach to sea would not have been critical. But the site provided little room for dispersal, very little possibility for digging in since the elevation of the highest point was about ten feet and that's where the guns were. There was no growth of bushes (found elsewhere on Wake) upon which to develop a camouflage pattern. Further, the battery was so crowded up against "D" battery that we could not expand to the east. I was forced to locate the rangefinder about thirty feet from the director in the direction of the lagoon from the guns.

It was assumed that the most likely direction of fire from Peale against an enemy would be from the Southwest clockwise around to the Northeast, and the prime direction would be Northwest to North. Of course, the south shore of Wake and Wilkes was much more favorable for enemy landings but the 5" guns were intended primarily to counter enemy ships laying down protective fire or, even more specifically, against enemy ships on a harassing raid. They were not very suitable (because of their flat trajectory) as field artillery. The heavy surf caused by the prevailing winds on the north shore made the likelihood of a landing attempt there less likely. Battery "B" would have been better located in the site given to Battery "D", with "D" located in one of the areas to which it was later moved. The two batteries located together gave bombers too concentrated a target; if they missed one, they hit the other. But worst of all, it gave me no options for location of the rangefinder and director. Perhaps some of these reflections may be attributed to excellent hindsight; yet I do recall the strong sense of a lack of elbow room from my first visit to the position.

There was no barbed wire immediately available but that really didn't matter for we would not have been given time to install it had it been available. There were no personnel shelters, not even fox holes which required much time to dig because of the mixed sand and hard coral. It was not until 6 December that I could report that the sandbagging around the perimeter of the guns had been completed (about 42" high.) This might have provided some shelter from flat trajectory naval gunfire fragments, but little against bombing and strafing from the air. We had on hand our ammunition, consisting of projectiles, separate bags of powder in canisters, plus fulminate of mercury primers which were to be inserted into the breech lock after the shell and powder had been rammed home. But we had no storage magazines. My request for lumber to be used to shore up the sides of holes we might dig was denied; all such material was to be used in the construction of the naval base buildings. The wooden barracks were well along in construction but there was no lumber to be had for building primitive protective storage for ammunition.

After the first bombing of Peale, it became more than obvious that leaning or lying against some sandbags left one

with a very insecure feeling. I ordered the digging of individual fox holes. These were completed but as the days went by and with that the realization that we might be spending some time looking up (with no warning radar and the constant noise of the surf, enemy bombers could be overhead before we were aware of them) some more spacious shelter seemed desirable. It's difficult sleeping in a fox hole. We first constructed a room type shelter about 10' x 10' with I-beams. Anything was now available for the taking. The I-beams were covered with coral. No sooner had we finished that than I realized that one direct hit would wipe out a dozen men. It was not as effective against a direct hit as would have been reinforced concrete; and we couldn't dig deep enough to get several feet of coral overhead. And so our next shelters were dug as a narrow trench with sufficient cover to protect against strafing. In the absence of reinforced concrete, I believe this covered trench shelter, dug in a zig-zag, provides maximum protection along with the psychological reinforcement of companionship that is missing in a fox hole. We used the buddy system to keep track of one another.

We had our first General Quarters drill on Saturday, 6 December. It went quite well; for the first time we had

the entire battery together. Many of us were almost strangers to the others. Gunnery Sergeant Anthony Polousky had been the senior NCO of "B" battery from San Diego, then Pearl, and on to Midway. He had been well trained in the procedures to be followed when communications were cut and in other emergency situations. Now he was assigned elsewhere. An old time Marine, Platoon Sergeant Forest Huffman, became my senior NCO. Other men I had worked tirelessly to organize as a team were with other batteries. One such man who I held in great respect for his intelligence, devotion to duty and quick response to unusual situations was Robert L. Stevens; he had been assigned to "L" battery and was the last man to die in battle on Wake Island. Another was Sergeant William A. Gleichauf who, I learned later, died along with the Sap he had engaged in a bayonet duel in the brush during the dark of night.

We were given a whole day off on Sunday. Had we known what was coming the next day, we would have occupied ourselves differently than we did. But in our blissful ignorance, John McAlister and I got together a bunch of canned sardines, saltine crackers and beer, then rowed a flat bottomed boat out to the lagoon reef northwest of

Kuku Point. We ostensibly were going to look for shells on the reef but I think the thing that took us out there was a romantic drive to explore the unknown. It was possible that the area we were to search had never been touched before by the foot of man.

We rowed out from the dock about 1000 so as to arrive at the reef at low tide. The tide was still ebbing when we arrived at the reef, but even then the surf was noisy and rough and sought to pull our feet out from under us. We tied the boat to a large chunk of coral and began wading out. Wading was slow going not only because of the need to search out a place to put each foot but also because of the strong current, but most importantly to search each crevice for possible treasure. None was to be found, although we found several giant clams, nearly a foot across. They lay attached to the bottom, partly open to the sky. When we approached slowly, the clam seemed unaware of our presence until one of us stood directly over it, when it would suddenly in alarm close and send a fountain of water up over our legs. Clams learn very slowly for we could repeat the performance several times with a clam until it finally grew sullen and refused to play fountain with us anymore. Anyway, we enjoyed our sardines, crackers

and warm beer before rowing back to the dock with the incoming tide.

This was the very area of water over which we believe the Jap rubber boats made their approach into the lagoon during darkness two weeks later. Their tide tables evidently were correct for they would have found it very difficult to paddle rubber boats against that tidal current.

That evening was spent as lazily as had been the day. Some mail had come in. My father wrote that he had bought a Dodge convertible (most unusual for conservative New England) and that they were really enjoying it because the weather had been unseasonably warm. My wife wrote of Honolulu activities and some late news of the Marine Corps Birthday Ball at Pearl Harbor, and inquired if I had received the portrait photo she had sent. It was a beautiful portrait, painted in color on ivory. It was on my desk as I wrote my return letters.

Monday, 8 December on Wake promised to be another calm, pleasant day. I dressed, shaved and went to breakfast. The entrée of that breakfast remains fixed in memory. Whatever else there was, I've forgotten but I've never forgotten that stack of six giant hot cakes with melting chunks of butter flowing over a thick glaze of syrup. I had eaten about a third

of the stack where we (there were probably four or five others eating at the time) heard the bugler sounding off.

It seems, so the story went, the music was a frustrated musician. He had enlisted hoping to become a member of the Marine Band, the President's Own, but having failed that for the time being, he took second choice as a bugler. The bugle was not among the top ten of his instrument choices.

It was too early for Colors and we had just had a General Quarters drill on Saturday. Inside the building the notes of the bugle call were blurred — but there was no mistaking a frantic appeal vibrating through the open doorway. It was quite unusual. I had finished another third of the cakes when someone came in to say it was no drill; the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. I bolted the rest of the cakes on my way to the door.

Platoon Sergeants Hoffman and Shugart and Sergeant's Manning and Schulze had already begun loading the trucks with men, equipment and small arms ammunition. It all went smoothly even though this was only the second time we had done it. I boarded the last truck and as we rounded the drive out of Camp #1, Major Devereux was standing at the side checking us out. A drop or two of syrup

still glistened on my chin as I rendered my salute.

It was hard to believe that we were at war, not just going to a drill. The American people, civilian and military alike, had been conditioned to believe that war was something that happened to other people, not to us. Some Congressmen had repeatedly voted down military appropriations and yet, at the same time, proclaimed that our defense forces were superior to any in the world. And just let those squat Japs start something; everyone knew they all wore glasses and were too blind to hit a target with either rifle shot or bomb. Why in three months we could have them back on Honshu begging us to go away. The media repeated the bombastic and unreal statements to create a euphoria of security in the public mind.

And so here we were riding the trucks to our gun positions on Peale Island, finally giving priority to the work we should have been doing all along. As we passed the new barracks under construction, we saw contractor's workmen on staging painting the sides of the buildings a brilliant white. It was unreal; Pearl Harbor had been attacked and the buildings were being made ready for a peacetime admiral's inspection. As we passed, some of the marines shouted at the workmen,

didn't they know there was a war on? The paint brushes continued at their prescribed task.

Upon our arrival at the battery position we went to work on improving the position, a process that continued every waking moment until 23 December. The sleeping moments became rarer. More sandbags were found and what had been adequate for a peacetime General Quarters became much less acceptable. The guns were checked and rechecked; ammunition caches were given more cover and, in some cases, relocated for greater dispersal. Telephone wires were dug in as much as possible but they were still far too shallow. The battery had no trained communications specialist, but I found that Pfc Joseph Commers had in a minor way knowledge of telephones and wiring and so he was appointed to keep our communications going. He did an excellent job. On at least two occasions when enemy fire had broken our lines, he had them back in less than ten minutes. He laid parallel lines so that a switch over could be quickly made. Commers was a serious and dependable young man who got things done with a minimum of talk. (He was to die on 1 November 1943 in a prisoner of war camp.)

Our officers and men were spread very thinly. Whereas

the Tables of Organization for a Defense Battalion called for 43 officers and 939 enlisted; we had 15 officers and 373 enlisted. The T.O. did not provide troops for infantry, tanks, field artillery, infantry support weapons such as mortars, and it did not provide for specialists such as radiomen, wiremen, cooks, etc. for isolated battery positions. Hence, not only were we not expected to be able to defend against an enemy landing but we had only about a third the personnel deemed necessary to stand off air and naval hit and run raids. And these minimum figures had been established by a Headquarters Marine Corps that was accustomed to doing more with less.

My guns were under three excellent NCOs; Platoon Sergeant Eugene Shugart, Sergeants Bernard Manning and Carl Schulze. In response to a letter I sent to them after the war asking for recommendations with respect to particularly meritorious actions, Sergeant Manning responded, "Let's just say that everyone did his job as a Marine." And so they did. Because I naturally worked more closely with some than with others, I do recall some more vividly than others.

Prior to 8 December, Sergeant Bertels was counting the days until his discharge, and he wasn't shipping over.

Yet when the first bombs fell on 8 December, he became a gung-ho Marine. He was everywhere lending a hand in the defense. Danger gave him an added spark. In my memory I have a distinct vision of Sergeant Bertels driving a bulldozer which he had found a mile down the road, and as he came driving it up to the battery position, enemy planes suddenly appeared overhead. He drove with such concentration that it appeared that he might not be aware of the danger above because of the noise his dozer was making. Some of the men caught his attention by waving and pointing to the sky. He acknowledged the warning but kept on driving until the bombs and shrapnel were actually falling around him. Only then did he jump from the dozer into a hole long enough for the planes to pass over. In Kiangwan prison camp he too finally succumbed to TB resulting from malnutrition. I noted the time of his death, 1815 on 23 March 1945. He had only a short time to go to be free, but, of course, we didn't know it then. In the case of TB, the doctors say an important factor is a person's will to live; Sergeant Bertels was a fighter and I'm sure he held out to the very last.

After 8 December, it became evident that eating

was going to need some management. The battery had no assigned cooks. At first we were much on our own, sending out scavenging parties for food. Unfortunately we seemed to come up with more fruit juices than anything. Too, it was much easier to open a can of juice than to prepare a meal at a time when every minute had to be spent on defenses. (There were no "C" rations and we would have relished some canned Spam.) The result was a sudden surge of diarrhea. Quite likely our sanitary conditions left something to be desired but I'm sure that most of our troubles came from too much fruit juice. I don't remember whether he volunteered or was assigned the job, but Pfc Robert Gray became mess sergeant for the battery. It wasn't long before he was assisted by twice daily meals brought into the position by civilians under the guidance of Dan Teters. Of course, Gray didn't lose his position as a fighting Marine when the enemy put in an appearance. He just didn't do quite as much shoveling in between times. Sergeant Bertels contributed to the meals also. He was a connoisseur of sour dough pancakes and so one morning he contributed his skill not only in finding some "starter" but also in preparing

pancakes for the whole battery.

The morning of December 8th was passed in continuing defense preparations and organizing watches, all of the housekeeping functions which we had not had an opportunity to practice before. Just a little before noon we had "knocked off" for lunch. Much of the talk had to do with guessing what had happened at Pearl Harbor and what steps the United States would take to put the Japs in their place. Suddenly our attention was drawn to the sound of multiple explosions and fire and smoke in the area of the airfield. There were two flights of heavy bombers moving to the north over Wake. Full realization of what was happening did not come readily, yet it was but seconds before we knew that finally the war had come to us. A flight of bombers was moving in our direction; then it turned and swung out over Camp II and the Pan American Air Station. This time the sickening crunch, crunch, crunch of systematic bombing was close enough to become more personal.

The Jap bombers were so low that the men fired their rifles at them. This was not so ridiculous as it may seem for our peacetime training had provided for rifle fire against aircraft. Unfortunately, in this case, the distance, low as the

planes were, was too great for effective rifle fire. This was the last time until December 23^d that enemy planes flew low enough to invite rifle fire.

Then it was all over. Some wounded men found their way to our position. We made them as comfortable as possible until Pharmacists Mate John Unger arrived with his vials of morphine and bandages. We began to get reports of the severe damage inflicted by very accurate bombing. Along with the reports of damage there were eye witness accounts of having seen the Nazi Swastika on the underside of the wings of the planes. My eyes had seen only the big round red meat balls of the Rising Sun but many men had become so convinced that Japs were incapable of effectively fighting anyone but Chinese civilians that they imagined swastikas on the planes. That was the only way they could explain to themselves what had happened. American propaganda had been all too effective. I don't think we yet realized what the Japs were up to.

Was this just a one-time hit or miss strike that they had looked out on? Would they be back the same day? Would they try to land troops soon? Why had they waited instead of hitting us at the same time they hit Pearl Harbor? Would we be reinforced? Many such questions were spoken but nobody

stopped the defensive work, digging and reinforcing.

Those questions became even more insistent the next day, 9 December. Whatever happened today would cast a well defined shadow over our future. If the Japs didn't come back, we could assume that the events of 8 December were a punishing but one-time affair. But if they did return, then we were definitely on their list for elimination. We were not neglected.

At about the same hour they were back, but this time they came in at a much higher altitude of about 13,000 feet. No more surprises; that is if 15 to 30 seconds is sufficient warning time. We sorely missed having a radar. (But we had the garbage truck, which had come in its space, to pick up the debris.) This time we could watch the entire bomb drop. And then as a flight turned down Peale Island, the crunch of exploding bombs grew louder. There was little to do but take shelter. How we wished our guns were of a more modern dual purpose (air and surface.) Taking punishment without a means of retaliation is both frustrating and enervating.

The nights in December on Wake were chill and wet. The trade winds blew ever more forcefully and the roar of the

surf was increasing, adding to the times when overly sensitive and imaginative ears picked out the rhythm of heavy motors from the monotony of the surf. False alarms are enervating too, for every time the adrenaline is poured out, there is a concomitant let down and the rebound effect is multiplied many times over. The nights did not bring a regeneration of physical and spiritual energy for sleep was fitful between watches, patrols, and the work on defenses that could be carried out under blackout conditions.

By 10 December we were already attuned to the prospects of war: it was as though it had been going on for ages. Added attention was given to reinforcement of the sand bags around the rangefinder. Both the rangefinder and the rangekeeper-director had been raised on flimsy wooden platforms to give an added elevation of about eight feet. Sandbags and loose sand were thrown up around the base of the stands so as to make personnel shelters against small bomb fragments. Personnel operating the instruments were completely exposed to enemy fire. When bomb doors were seen to open and bombs could be seen on their way down, it was time to abandon the instruments and take shelter. This was the case on 10 December. This

time both "B" and "D" batteries were targets. Fortunately for "B" battery our share of bombs missed, landing largely in the lagoon, but close enough that the crunch, crunch, crunch of sticks of bombs walking ever closer echoed in the stomachs of men who crouched against sandbags, furious but helpless to retaliate. That the bombseams no closer was quite evidently due to the accurate fire put up by the anti-aircraft guns of Captain Godbold's "D" battery. He watched in fascination and a feeling of "at last!" as the puffs of smoke broke among the enemy planes as they entered their bombing run. They made two passes over Peale and then they were gone.

The night of 10-11 December was damp with intermittent rain. It was very dark. Yet it was the first night of the war that I finally fell into a deep sleep. Sometime about 0300, I was awakened by a message from the CP that enemy ships were believed to be off the south shore of Wake. This was soon followed by orders to General Quarters and then by orders not to fire the guns until told to do so. At the time, this latter order seemed superfluous to "B" battery. It was impossible to see anything from Peale Island. Patrols and extra lookouts were established to try to prevent any surprise landing on Peale; ammunition was brought up for ready

access at the guns; and then it was a case of just waiting for something to happen. We received a second admonition to withhold fire until ordered otherwise.

About 0500 we saw enemy shell fire landing on the islands across the lagoon. Diesel oil tanks were hit and went up in flames. Not until about 0600 did we receive the order to commence firing. "B" battery still had no visible target although it was light enough to see. Finally, about fifteen minutes later, a division of three destroyers appeared off the tip of Kuku Point, moving in a northwesterly direction.

The range was about 10,000 yards. Fire was opened on the lead destroyer. After ten salvos, a hit was made on the stern of the target and a fire could be seen aboard it. Fire was shifted to the second destroyer in line. In the meanwhile the rangefinder data ceased to come in to the rangekeeper-director at my CP. Muzzle blast from the guns had disabled the rangefinder since the line of fire was directly over the rangefinder. A Model 1911 rangefinder had never in its previous life aboard ship been called upon to withstand such mis-treatment. At about the same time, the recoil cylinder filling pipe plug on Gun #2 blew out. Gun #2 was disabled. Corporal Terry was hit in the side but refused any medical aid. His side was

bruised with an enormous welt bulging about 4" in diameter that looked as though he had a giant hernia. The entire gun crew of Gun #2 was shifted to Gun #1 as an extended line of ammunition handlers. As fire continued from this one gun, the enemy ships were returning our fire with great accuracy. Their deflection was perfect from the very first. There was no question as to who their target was. But since they were firing flat trajectory weapons, they found our low lying position difficult to hit in range. At first their shells burst with greenish-yellow picric acid blobs in the lagoon directly in front of us. Then they went over us to land on the north beach. Then they split the straddle and we were in the middle of their pattern. It was unbelievable to see so many shell bursts in the battery position and yet to suffer no casualties. One shell was observed by the men at the gun to fly down the open path between the two parallel lines of ammunition passers to explode beyond without harming anyone. Had it been a few feet either side, it would have wiped out half the gun crew. Had it been a bit shorter in range, it would have destroyed the gun as well. The only explanation for the ineffectiveness of the enemy shell bursts must be that they were firing armor piercing shells rather than

the high explosive type used by field artillery against unfortified land targets. But they did cause one casualty; the communication wires between the CP and director and the gun position were hit. My gun crews had had very little time to train in the use of local control and so both Platoon Sergeant Huffman and Sergeant Bertels were sent to the gun with instructions to keep it firing on the best available data. If we were to keep any control at all over the data being supplied the gun, it was necessary to keep the rangekeeper-director functioning. But without wire communication, I was forced to send intermittent changes in fire control data to the gun by messenger. After about ten rounds of this fire, a hit was observed on the second destroyer. The third and second ships then turned and laid a smoke screen between us and the first destroyer which was moving away to the southwest. A couple rounds were attempted at a transport at an estimated maximum range without benefit of rangefinder but it was quite evidently out of range. Commers was meanwhile busy and had repaired our wire lines before the action was over.

The enemy had retreated. In the whole action our only personnel casualties had been the blow to Terry's side and I had been nicked on the nose by a flying fragment.

that brought an alarming flow of blood from what was a mere minor cut. At first, Hoffman thought I had been badly hurt and that he would have to take over, but a double Unger bandaid quickly covered the cut and, after I wiped my face with a wet rag, the damage was slight.

The conduct of everyone was superb. They were proud. There was no fear evident as the enemy shells fell about them; it was as though here at last they had been given an opportunity to fight back and they were determined to do so. There was no cheering but I sensed a feeling of great pride and satisfaction in the relaxed look in their faces. They had been tested and found themselves not wanting.

I believe a partial explanation for their buoyancy and ability to snap back from a depressing mood born of frustration at not being able to fight back previously can be found not only in their marine training but also in their youth. The majority were about 19 years old. I believe it was this that contributed to their later elasticity under the trauma of captivity. They survived better because they were U.S. Marines but also they were younger than most other Americans who became P.O.W.s.

And then it was back to work, getting ready for whatever was to come next. By a miracle (they didn't know how they

really did it) the rangefinder crew had the rangefinder back in service by mid-day. Gun #2 had been repaired with the assistance of Gunner Borth.

The day would have been incomplete without a visit from the Jap bomber group. Both Peale and Wake batteries were again the target but we had no casualties. This time it was different; we had had our day of fighting back and there was little of the feeling of frustration as the bombers passed over. We wondered if the bomber crews knew how badly their invasion attempt had failed.

The same day "D" battery was ordered to displace to the eastern end of Peale Island, thus opening an area for expansion of "B" battery. Plans were immediately under way to find a better location for the rangefinder, where it would be free of muzzle blast no matter what the direction of fire might be.

About 1500, a smoke bomb with a vertical chain of three red balls was observed just above the water northeast of Toki Point, offshore about 3000 yards. An attempt was made to get a range on it with the rangefinder but it was gone too quickly. A report was made but no satisfactory explanation was ever found for the signal. We believed it must have been made by a submarine. Occasionally other

Lights had appeared at about the same location offshore. The signals were repeated twice during a half hour period. From this, other people have guessed they they were signals from enemy survivors trying to contact a submarine.

The next day, 12 December, the Saps gave us something new to keep us on the alert. About 0500, Two four-engine patrol bombers came over bombing and strafing. Their movements were so slow that they aroused little of the apprehension that was felt for the noon-day bombers.

I felt it necessary to check out the gun that had been repaired by test firing it. I requested permission to do so. While we waited for permission, I made plans for the range-finder to check out its readings against the splashes that would be made by the shells falling in the sea. Both guns and range finder were zeroed on one spot. To our astonishment and annoyance we were told we could not test fire since any gunfire was likely to upset the civilians who were dispersed in the brush all over the island. It would be almost impossible to get word to them of what we were doing and they would assume that another battle was beginning. And so we had to wait for the enemy to put in another appearance before we could check the reliability of our armament.

The anticipated noonday bombing failed to materialize and there was a great sense of relaxation. I sent two men to the CP for equipment and told one of them to go to my tent in Camp #1, which I had not seen since 8 December, and find the precious picture of my wife which I had neglected to retrieve in the haste to get to the battery position on 8 December. He reported back with both the picture and some badly needed clean socks. That was all he could salvage from the shambles that had been my tent. Although the tent city was unoccupied (we all found any sleep we could at our gun positions), the Japs must have assumed otherwise for they had bombed it thoroughly.

The period 13-20 December now blends into a miasma where one bombing merges into another with periods of relaxation and then gloom as the various rumors of relief and no relief were repeated over the island. There were morning and evening attacks by the ponderous four-engine patrol bombers, an occasional photo reconnaissance overflight, and the continuing, unceasing improvement of our positions, largely with shovel for we still had little defensive supplies and equipment. The rangefinder was moved into the area near the old location of Battery "D" where it would not be knocked out by muzzle blast.

We established patrols joining up with those of Battery "D", and improved infantry type defensive positions, including a machine gun at the extreme tip of Toki Point. This effort to perform as both artillery and infantry was very tiring. It allowed little opportunity to rest and regain strength.

Although we welcomed the elbow room provided by the move of Battery "D", we soon realized how much we had become the most visible target of the noonday bombers. Battery "D" had done an excellent camouflage job in their new position and had set up a dummy installation in their old area so as to induce the Japs to continue bombing there. That they did and continued to include us in their bomb patterns. The raid on 13 December was particularly awesome as forty one planes moved overhead! On 16 December there were only eighteen attacking planes but they gave us considerable attention.

Then on 20 December rumors that reinforcements were on the way, both troops and planes, spread rapidly over the island. A PBV plane had flown in from Pearl Harbor bringing news of the plans for relief and reinforcement of the atoll. It was too good to be true.

On 21 December, shortly after the PBV took off on

its return trip to Pearl Harbor, we were attacked by 29 Jap Navy attack-bombers covered by 18 fighter planes. Our joy over the news of reinforcements was now tempered by the realization that a new factor had been added to our problems; the Jap Navy with carriers was moving in again for the kill. We were unaware that we were to be abandoned by the U.S. Navy. We figured that Wake Island was about to become the nexus of Pacific operations and we would be in the thick of it. That was far better than being left to drift in our uncertainty. This contemplation of our situation was brief, interrupted by the arrival of 33 noonday bombers. Their attack on Peale Island was very accurate, destroying the director of Battery "D" and killing the battery executive. That night Battery "D" moved again, but one gun and the height finder were moved to augment Battery "E" on Wake. One gun was left in position to simulate battery fire and the remainder of the personnel and two guns were relegated to beach defense missions. There was no longer any effective anti-aircraft defense on Peale Island.

The next day 33 Jap carrier attack-bombers escorted by six fighters attacked. Now there was no question

concerning enemy plans; we were being softened for another landing attempt. We worked during every minute of daylight to prepare our ground defenses, digging supporting fire positions, beach positions, and final defense positions. At night, such sleep as we could manage between patrols and watches was interrupted by false alarms and an occasional shower of cold rain.

The morning of 23 December, at about 0130, we were alerted by flashing lights at a great distance to the north. The way they flickered on and off, much like heat lightning on a hot evening in Indiana, it was difficult to determine just what they were. I had never observed heat lightning over the ocean and therefore assumed it was either a great talk fest between ships or the flashes of many guns at a distance so great that no sound of the firing could be heard, at least not above the constant roar of the surf. As to who might be firing at what, there were two likely possibilities, either our naval forces were engaging the Japs, or the Japs were shelling the open ocean after having falsely located Wake Island, where it wasn't. At the time it was more comforting to assume the gunfire possibilities; any assumption that the flashes were communication signals could be interpreted only that the Japs

were so confident that they were disdainfully making us aware of their coming. After some phone queries to the CP, we were told there were no friendly ships in the area. That ended any hopeful conjectures. In the meanwhile, all stations were manned including the beach machine guns.

At about 0145 the rangefinder operator reported that he believed small boats were off the north shore; there were bobbing lights. A report of this was made to the CP, subject to verification. A patrol was sent to the north beach, and although occasional lights could be seen, no boats were visible. At about the same time, a query was received from the CP concerning a reported landing on Peale Island. No such report had been made by Battery "B" but a second patrol was sent out along the beach to check out the report. No evidence of landings was found and was so reported. However, at about 0215 a red flare was observed in the vicinity of the Pan American Air Station. Subsequent conjecture leads to the conclusion that the lights sighted off the north shore were on boats which found their way around to the reef between Toki and Kuku Points over which they passed into the lagoon and then landed on the lagoon beach of Wake. It can be assumed that they fired the

red flares to announce their approach to the landing site. A patrol from Battery "B" sent up the lagoon beach toward Pan-Air made contact with a patrol from Battery "D" without incident. At about the same time, the area of Wake just west of Peacock Point was illuminated by a large explosion and fireball that lasted for several minutes, revealing the structure of a Jap ship at fire. We took advantage of the brief daylight to check out the beaches of Peale for any signs of a landing.

At about 0330 flashes were observed off Peacock Point followed by the deep rumble of distant heavy naval gunfire. We attempted to get a range on the flashes but our clumsy coincidence type rangefinder was not adaptable.

During the next two hours we heard reports over the phone of enemy landings on both Wilkes and Wake but none was attempted on Peale. Battery "D", now reduced to little effectiveness as an anti aircraft unit, was ordered to the area of the CP to man 3" AA guns for beach defense and to reinforce the mixed group of cooks, sailors, airmen, soldiers, quartermaster personnel, and civilians now trying to put up a defense as infantry. That left Battery "B" with responsibility for all of Peale and much of the north shore of Wake.

If we sent out patrols to cover the miles of shore line, the guns would have been without sufficient men to fire them. When Battery "D" was ordered to the CP area as infantry, some of the civilians who had been helping at Battery "B" expressed the belief that they could be more useful in the fight around the CP and joined up with Battery "D". This was not the first time they had "deserted" as to join the AA gun crews. They floated back and forth between the two batteries, going wherever the action was at the moment.

These were the men who had been working for the contractors developing the base under Dan Teters. There had been some attempt to organize these men, before 8 December, who might volunteer as reserves. After the bombs started to fall, many of the summer soldiers disappeared into the brush, not to be seen again during the fight. On the other hand, many showed up at the guns for the first time, anxious to help in any way they could. Some of these I remember particularly for their "cando" spirit were George Harris, Anne Astad, Thomas Hyall and Albert Louis Boutell, all of California; also there was Doris Lee Ralston (a guy from Ohio), Tompie Huskinson of Kentucky, Roy Lewis Howard of Arizona,

William Yeaman of Idaho, and Lawrence Scott from Wyoming. They were willing to do almost anything. They begged to be given rifles. There were no rifles for them, for each Marine was at that time issued a rifle that was his own, to keep with him wherever he might go, and there were no other rifles except at supply points. But we had boxes of hand grenades and each of the men was provided three of these — after they were given instruction and training in their use. The men were quite aware of the difficult situation they might find themselves in if they were taken prisoner in civilian clothes and armed. Yet they were quite ready to take the chance. They were then given assignments at the guns, largely concerned with fetching shells and powder canisters from the caches scattered about as much as a hundred feet from the guns. They also had skills as carpenters and other construction work which were invaluable as we worked to strengthen the defenses. Their names were included in the report which I prepared at the end of the war to be submitted to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. I never heard anything further from any of them and do not know how many survived captivity on Wake or in China and Japan. Their

status was never clearly defined, except by the Japs who said they were POW's and that was that.

After the surrender of Wake, the civilian workmen were treated no better than the military men, and in some cases worse, if that were possible. At about 1400 on 23 December I was riding in the back of a pickup truck with Commander Cunningham under guard of the Jap landing force commander, his aide, two privates and an interpreter we came to call "Garters" (his uniform included shorts and garters.) As we passed a large rock near the airfield, a wounded civilian hobbled on a leg that appeared broken, with uplifted arms begging for help. The command was given to stop the truck and there was momentary concern by the Japs that the civilian constituted a threat. When it was decided that such was not the case, the truck moved on, leaving the injured man to his fate. Later, I was driven back over the same route to Peacock Point. As we passed the same rock, I saw the wounded civilian no longer needed help. He had been bayoneted and his throat slashed from ear to ear; the flies were already buzzing about his throat. The Jap bayonets were sharpened lovingly to a razor edge; the oil that prevented rust was perfumed by each individual to reflect his own personality.

As first light broke on that morning of 23 December, my attention was directed to some unusual objects on Wilkes across the lagoon. As I looked through my BC scope I could see scores of Jap flags scattered over the center of the island. This was reported by phone to the CP. Later, when I looked at Wilkes again, the flags were no longer visible. This too was reported.

As I searched Wilkes for evidence of what the flags might mean, my attention was drawn to the masts and stack of a ship close in to the south shore of Wake. Inasmuch as any activity on Wake was obscured by the high bushes and the hull of the ship was also hidden, I reported my observation to the CP with a request for permission to fire on the ship.

Permission was given with a warning not to fire into our own men which were in the area. This precaution was one that had already occupied my thoughts. Usually when firing at a target it is desirable to so place initial shots that they are visible and then to spot up or down so as to bracket the target, thus establishing the hitting range. Corrections in deflection (right or left) were made simultaneously in a similar way.

But in this case I could not put shots on land and then spot up. From my OP, only ten feet above ground level, I could

not see the ocean beyond Wake. My only hope of success hinged on hitting either the mast or stack of the ship. Deflection was a greater problem than range. I took several readings of the wind with a wet finger, much to the amusement of Huffman and the other men around. My unscientific calculations proved out, for the first salvo took off the top of the mainmast. From then on the problem was easy, to reduce the range sufficiently to place a ladder of fire over the hull. That the ship was hit and caught fire could be determined by the smoke that arose. Otherwise, the effect of the shelling could not be seen from my position. A marine, V.R. Vardell, who was manning a beach defense machine gun on Wake, later reported that the ship was repeatedly hit while troops were disembarking and that it caught fire. Such a report evidently was made to the CP, for about 0625 we received a message that the ship was demolished and to cease fire.

Now my attention shifted to the sea off the north shore. While I had been concentrating on the south shore of Wake, behind my back it seemed as though the entire Jap Navy had slipped in. There were at least a dozen ships and four heavy cruisers were in the middle of the column. It was a most ominous sight and it was incredible that they were

not firing at us. A rangefinder reading placed them at over 16,000 yards, beyond our effective range. I reported to the CP that I would keep them under observation and wait for them to close the range. Members of the gun crews were disappointed when they found we would not fire at the column. Some wanted to fire anyway, just to show our contempt. But I saw little to be gained by exhibiting to the Japs that we couldn't reach them. Later I learned that their actions were deliberate; they dared not fire for fear of hitting their own troops and so stayed out of range of our guns for which they had developed considerable respect. In any event, I wasn't going to show them exactly how far out beyond our range they really were, hoping to lure them in as we had done on 11 December. And too, our ammunition supply was down; just how far down I didn't realize until the day's work was over.

However, the impatience of the gun crews was soon relieved. At about 0700, a column of three destroyers appeared off Kuku Point, much as they had on 11 December. After four salvoes at the lead ship, I noted that it had stopped and appeared to be settling in the water. I decided that since

it was stopped I could come back to it later to finish it off if need be. And so I shifted fire to the second in line but it moved out of range before we made any hits.

I then returned my BC scope to the area where I had last seen the first ship. It had disappeared. Many of my men insisted that they had seen it sink. However, I was not satisfied that such was the case until some time later when as POW's some marines (Pistole, Reeves and Zellay) told me that they were on Wilkes Island at the time and saw the ship go down.

All the time that we were firing on the destroyers to the southwest, the column of much heavier ships to the north continued its monotonous passage without trying to silence us. The only reason I could ever discover for their kindness was that in error they believed their own troops to be on Peale.

However, even though we escaped the vengeance of the heavy guns, one even more deadly was soon thereafter directed against us. We were attacked repeatedly by what might be called glide-bombers. They were not true dive bombers for we never saw only the hub of the propellers when we were the target. They came in very low, at about two to three hundred feet and released their bombs

as they passed over. That some were three-seaters was easily seen for they leaned out of the canopy and waved as they released their bombs. This gesture, probably humorous from their point of view, undoubtedly arose from their knowledge that our anti aircraft defense was reduced to firing rifles and pistols at them. I saw no effect on them from this ground fire. However, their bombing was not effective either, although it was quite deafening. Apparently their bombs were fused with armor piercing noses so that they did not explode horizontally on earth contact and thus spread destruction and death over a wide area. Instead the explosions were delayed until the bombs had penetrated the coral sand and rock to a depth of over twelve feet. The explosions were in the nature of a fountain effect. A bomb I judged to be a 500 pounder landed no farther than about fifteen feet from my hole, yet the only effect I felt was a terrific concussion. They returned again and again to their play. We could see planes performing similarly all over Wake Island. Then they were gone; all was quiet and I assumed they had left to rearm.

At about 0800, the telephone TALKER turned to me

with a worried look; he said, "They say to stop firing the 5" guns, we are surrendering the island." I asked him to repeat the message, but it was the same. It was so unbelievable that I put on the phones and called the CP myself. There was no response. Then finally I heard the voice of my old Naval Academy shipmate, Clarence Barninger, the commander of "A" Battery on Teacock Point. Yes, he assured me, it was true, we were surrendering. He told me what he was doing to prepare for the arrival of Jap troops. We both expressed the hope we would be seeing one another again and rang off. For a few minutes we were all too stunned to speak. Then some of the men began to express the opinion that we should disregard the order and keep on fighting. But I told them we had to carry out our orders and that we had no idea what the terms of surrender might be and that we might endanger the lives of those already in Jap hands if we broke the terms as agreed to by our commander. But since I couldn't find out what the terms of surrender were (there were none), I decided to do what could be done to render the guns useless. I told Platoon Sergeant Huffman to take off the firing locks and throw them out into the ocean. He later reported this.

accomplished but not before he had embellished the deed by firing off all remaining primers. He also broke the lenses on the gun sights and put sand in the elevating and traversing mechanisms. An attempt was made to disable the breech locks by operating them repeatedly with sand poured into the threads.

Not knowing how we would be approached by the Japs, I ordered the men to keep their rifles operable. I thought it possible that the Japs would renege on a surrender and come at us shooting. If that happened I wanted to be able to return the fire. I had read of Jap actions in China where they had fired on unarmed Chinese for the fun of it and had used defenseless people for bayonet practice.

Then I asked for an inventory of ammunition on hand. I knew we were low but I was unprepared for the results, five rounds of 5" ammunition on hand. That was it! The order to cease firing the guns had been almost unnecessary.

We rigged a bed sheet on a pole to indicate our compliance with the surrender order. Barninger had said he was doing this and thought it would avoid any misunderstandings. It turned out to be a wise precaution for we had just finished erecting the pole when the carrier

bombers returned. This time they merely buzzed our position and were gone. Maybe they would play by the rules.

I believed it might be some time before we had anything to eat again. (My premonition of dietary insufficiency was to be proven all too accurate.) And so I broke out all the food and some candy bars that we had been hoarding in caches. Some did not feel very much like eating but I urged them to eat as much as they could. When we were finished, I ordered a policing of the area. Old habits didn't die. I had an obscure idea that when the Saps did show up, at least they wouldn't be able to say we lived in a pig pen. It was important to impress an honorable enemy; later did we come to have no concern for their opinions for we had such a low opinion of them.

Then, there they were. Three truckloads of Sap soldiers came speeding into our midst, braked suddenly in a cloud of dust and quickly disembarked. They came toward us gesturing that we should approach them with our hands up. The signal for "hands up" was easy enough to understand but the signal for "come here" was made with the cupped hand down, the fingers pointing to the ground and then retracted into a fist. It appeared to be a signal to lie

down and there was some confusion among the surrendering marines, which led to some very harsh sounds and movements from the Japs.

I hesitated; then realizing I had left my wife's photo in my pack, I started to retrieve it. With a deep guttural warning bark, much like that of a baboon, the nearest Jap pointed his bayonet at me and made as if to lunge. Just as it seemed that he was about to teach me instant obedience, a loud shout in Japanese from a pickup truck caused him to turn and I saw Commander Cunningham standing in the back of the truck with the Jap landing force commander. I was motioned to the truck and climbed in with the Commander and four Japs, including an interpreter. I spoke to the Commander of my concern for the treatment of my men and was assured by the Jap commander that they would be well treated. That turned out to be a matter of opinion. If the treatment was compared to that the Japs had accorded the Chinese, there was less savagery but it was uncivilized and brutal. At least they weren't used for bayonet practice though I doubt they were ever very far from that either.

As soon as it was apparent that we would give them no trouble, the truck was ordered back to Wake. We passed the injured civilian I have previously mentioned and then drove on down Wake to the channel crossing. There we met up with a group of marines, including Major Devereux, being questioned as to other locations of marines not yet brought in. Captain Platt was there with Johnny McAlister and a marine whose shoulder was very badly wounded, part of it being torn away. The man was in pain and Platt was begging the Saps for some drinking water for the man. When none was forthcoming, he motioned to one of the canteens a Sap soldier was carrying. The response was an angry bark that left it certain that not only was the injured man not to get any water but that Platt himself would be in bad trouble if he persisted in his requests. Platt's sense of concern for his men frequently led him to disregard his own welfare in many situations, and here he persisted until the man was very reluctantly given a sip of water.

We were separated so as to prevent our speaking with one another. Then I and an enlisted marine were ordered into a truck load of Saps. I was motioned to sit on the

top of the cab. The purpose soon became clear; they were very jittery as we approached areas of dense bushes and I was a hostage displayed in full view so that if any Americans still holding out fired on the truck, I would be the first casualty. We traversed the length of Wake, finally stopping at Battery "A" on Peacock Point. The Japs were very cautious. I was ordered down and put in the forefront of a squad scouting out the position. A white sheet floated from a pole atop the CP, but it had been vacated.

Now the Japs were more relaxed and began to laugh and chatter amongst themselves. I became aware that I was the subject of their talk when they pointed to the sun and indicated that as it sank into the west I would be used for bayonet practice, the latter being vividly illustrated by quite professionally demonstrated jabs and thrusts towards my torso. But I was so tired and exhausted at this point that I didn't really care, as though I were under the influence of a strong narcotic. It may be that we humans, like many animals, release some hormone at times of impending death that mercifully lessens the sense of doom and terror.

In any event, it seemed as though my apparent indifference to their threats caused them to lose interest in the game. Finally, when they ordered me back into the truck, I responded with "O.K." This was a term they all had learned from American movies and it struck such a common chord that to them I became a fellow instead of an animal to be baited and tormented. For the next mile or so, they kept repeating "O.K." as though it were a miracle that we all used and understood the term. The next stop was my destination, one that I a short while before never expected to see; it was the White House, the bungalow built for the base commander. I was to be treated as upper crust brass.

There was Major Devereux, Captain Wesley (Cotey) Platt, Johnny McAlister, myself, and others I've now forgotten, a small percentage of the officers. Several times the interpreter we called "Garters" came around to educate us as POW's. Then, the Jap Admiral KajioKa appeared before us in his white uniform and medals. The interpreter tried unsuccessfully to educate us in the art of bowing in obeisance. We never learned it very well despite the efforts of later instructors. KajioKa delivered a stern warning

lecture in gutters the substance of which was translated by Garters as "You must obey." He then gave the sentry guarding us instructions and taking the sentry's rifle with bayonet fixed he made threatening motions at us. He was not in a jovial mood, undoubtedly influenced by the disaster he had suffered at our hands on 11 December and the heavy casualties suffered this time. We were told several times that it was unfair that they had lost so many more men than had we. Then, dark settled over the island and I lay down to sleep on the wooden floor. I slept soundly for nearly twelve hours, never waking for the changing of the guard, a ceremony that normally required much shouting of orders and checking of prisoners.

The next morning I awoke to a brilliant sun and reality. A new assistant interpreter was on hand. We learned that he (as well as most of the interpreters we encountered) had been educated in the U.S.A. He gave us our first lesson in the Japanese language. He greeted us with O-hi-yo go-zai-mus, which translates to: "Good Morning, good sir." He suggested we should remember it easily since it began with the name of an

American state. This was a source of wonderment and discussion much like that stimulated by "OK." We later found that it pleased the Japs very much to be so greeted, even if it was afternoon. Noon at Wake was about 0800 in Tokyo; the Japs kept their watches set on Tokyo time and all seemed to marvel that the sun rose so early on Wake and set so early.

Johnny Mac and I were up early Christmas morning and went outside the house to absorb some of the sunshine. For the time, the Japs seemed relaxed and we were allowed to walk near the house. The only way we found out the restrictions was to experiment until challenged. We came upon a proclamation which had been hastily prepared and tacked up on the house. It was obvious it had been prepared before the landing (probably before 11 December) for in it they seemed to be addressing the local inhabitants and not the U.S. military. They seemed to be much surprised that there were no women on the island. In the house I found some ink and very scratchy pen, and then, while Johnny Mac kept a watch out, I copied word for word, line for line, scratch-outs as closely as I could. I

managed to keep the copy through the next four years.

Christmas dinner required little preparation or clean-up. Each received one slice of quite stale bread with a spoonful of jam, obviously taken from our own food stores. I later learned that the majority of officers and men had nothing. They were tied up with wire, hands behind the back and a loop of wire run up from the wrists around the neck so that any movement was difficult. They were stripped of clothing and exposed in the open on what was called the "rock pile." Machine guns were set up, loaded and aimed ominously at the prisoners. It was as though the Japs considered us as so many cattle. We later learned that there had been a difference of opinion among the Jap brass as to whether or not we were to live. The question was submitted to Tokyo; we got a thumbs up. Senior officers in the field could not always control headstrong subordinates. The machine guns and wires were removed. It was Christmas.

The next day I was summoned aboard a pick-up truck and taken out to Battery "B" position. On the way out Garter's assistant (a decent guy as Japs went)

repeatedly bemoaned the fact that Roosevelt had forced us to war with one another. I was given a cigarette and treated in a friendly fashion. We later came to recognize this routine as a softening process preliminary to questioning. A Jap captain and several others were waiting for me. Platoon Sergeant Hoffman also was there and apparently they had been questioning him. I soon discovered that their interest was solely on our ammunition supply. They found it incredible that we had so little ammunition remaining and were certain we had a hidden supply. My denials quickly brought threats from the captain to use his sword on my neck. Of course, in the very primitive fashion we had stored the ammunition, I could not be absolutely certain that I did know all the little caches. However, my manner must have convinced them, for after a short discussion among them, I was dismissed. It had been easy; I didn't have to lie. As I headed for the truck, I noticed a small unbroken case of food about twenty feet distant. They allowed me to retrieve it and carry it back to the White House.

At the White House we found some tools to break open the wooden box. It was a case of canned sardines, the kind Johnny Mac and I had had for lunch on the reef. It was decided that we must be prepared for a long stay and began rationing the sardines at two per man per day. It was the only protein and fat we had to supplement the rice gruel the Japs supplied.

We watched the Jap operation as they took over the island. They seemed to have a poor understanding of automobile mechanics, for they drove our trucks with no care, almost as though they were trying to disable them with rough treatment. On the other hand we could not but watch in admiration the performance of their aircraft. In particular they had a single engine seaplane that took off and performed in a way quite superior to any we had seen in the U. S. Navy. Johnny Mac and I watched all this and speculated on the possibility of getting possession of a small boat with auxiliary sail and the chance of making it to Hawaii. It would have been a gamble with slight chance of success but I'm sure we would have taken it, if we could have found

a boat. The odds if we remained with the Japs weren't all that great either.

I think it was about 12 January 1942, we were told that we were to leave the island and must reduce our luggage to a minimum. This was no problem for me, I had little other than the Kaiki cotton uniform I wore. I didn't even have a toothbrush. One prisoner had requested that we be supplied with toothbrushes from the large stock we knew to be on the island. We were informed that the people of Japan had long gone without toothbrushes and that we must now learn to do the same. We were constantly told they were a spiritual people whereas we were a materialistic society. Yet their greed for material things became abundantly apparent whenever such things became available to them, such as the rings and watches that were taken as loot from the prisoners. They were taken "under the authority of the Great Empire of Japan", which they seemed to think gave legality to their thievery. We were given copies of orders which prescribed the punishment of death for everything from egoism to using more than two blankets. However, we were promised those "cooperating with Japan in constructing the 'New Order of the Great Asia

which lead to the world's peace will be well treated." This and other orders later published were signed "The End." I suspect this ending was inspired by American movies, highly popular in Japan.

Our cruise was to be on the erstwhile luxury liner, Nitta Maru. As we approached it in a motor launch, it appeared to be anything but a cruise ship. The ship's booms swung out and cargo nets attached to a hook were lowered into the boat. We were signalled to grab onto the net and were immediately raised and deposited on the deck. We were prodded to move forward down a hatchway ladder, down deck after deck, kicked and pushed every time we stumbled. The Japs took great delight, laughing and chattering in glee every time they had an opportunity to kick or hit a prisoner with a club. Occasionally a prisoner was stopped and searched at the whim of one of the Japs in the ganglet; he who had not previously lost a watch or ring, lost them here. Major Devereux who had an envelope of family papers which he had saved up until this time, now lost them. At last we found ourselves crowded into a cold, bare compartment where each of us had about six square feet of deck space, our home for the next ten days.

The lights never were turned off and so we lost all sense of time, sleeping and dozing whenever the boredom overwhelmed. We were prohibited from talking and a sentry stood at the door to enforce the rule. Platt broke the rule once and was taken out, suspended from some pipes and clubbed over the back until when he was released, he could barely stumble back to his spot. Someone had brought aboard a Bible and for the first time in my life, I read it cover to cover - and then again. Another book passed around was "The Yearling." I read it after we had been fed two meals a day of a small cup of rice gruel with a piece of daikon radish. Since we had not been exercising, not even moving around, the hunger was not of a ravenous nature; it was more of a dull, far away emptiness. That is, it was until I read "The Yearling" and became quite envious of the dog that was given the smoked alligator tail.

There were times when a general alarm was sounded. We could hear the clatter of running feet on the deck above and then the steel door to our compartment would be swung closed, dogged tight and the sound of a bar being set to reinforce it on the other side. It was apparent what our fate was to be in the event the ship was sunk.

by one of our submarines. We did not learn until much later that on one of these occasions, five of men were taken topside and, amid much ceremony, were beheaded. Apparently they were selected at random, not because of individual transgressions but because the Japs felt a blood hatred of all Americans. These men were chosen as symbolic victims.

Every two days we were given a special entree with our bowl of gruel, a dried fish, four 5 inches long, very bony and not much flesh. We picked at our fish to find every speck of edible flesh, right up into the head where the flesh became very bitter. On our last day aboard, just before debarking, we were each given about one ounce of salmon. It was one of the more memorable meals of my imprisonment. I could feel my body respond to the energy provided by that small chunk of salmon.

One day the guard became very friendly, smiling and telling us how terrible it was that Japan and the U.S. were at war. Then he showed us large photos of the destruction they had caused at Pearl Harbor. It was unbelievable. We suspected the photos had been doctored and yet the more we examined them the more it became apparent

what had happened. We were probably the first Americans to see such photos and among a very few to know of the scale of the disaster except for those who were either at Pearl or at the White House in D. C. Then having satisfied himself that we were impressed by the power of Japan, he showed us photos of Clark Gable and Carole Lombard. Very sadly and with great sincerity he told us that Carole Lombard had died in a plane crash. At the time I had been much too busy to take note of the gossip of Hollywood and so had to be informed of the relationship she and Gable had. Unlike the Sep sentry, I felt a much greater sadness reflecting on the photos of Pearl Harbor. The incident did illustrate the kind of love-hate feelings the Japs had for us; something we were to see repeated in many ways in the years to come.

Some of the prisoners, including a few of the officers, were taken off the ship at Yokohama. There was no reason apparent as to why certain ones were selected for Japan while the rest stayed aboard for a further voyage to Shanghai.

As we left the ship at the dock at Shanghai we were sprayed with an insecticide, presumably for lice, although we

were not required to disrobe. It seemed to be a perfunctory performance carried out to discomfort us; most of the spray was on my face. As we left the ship we could see that army soldiers were waiting to receive us; bad as the navy had been, we viewed the army with less enthusiasm. There were speeches; none were understood. After a march of several miles, we arrived at a cluster of old unpainted stalls, not unlike those used for cattle at country fairs in the U.S.A. Again we were lined up and our new camp commandant harangued us at length. From the interpreter we learned that he was Colonel Yuse and that we must obey. After every five minutes of severe admonishment, the colonel would stop for the interpretation; invariably it was, "You must obey." We learned later that this was an assistant interpreter who became known as Mortimer, also as Mickey Mouse. The chief was Ishihara, later to gain the title of "Beast of the East."

We were given two "blankets" each. They were of a composition related to blotting paper. It was January and we were dressed in cotton kaiki. The temperature was below freezing; ice formed in the muddy puddles.

The building interior consisted of an 8 foot wide

aisle down the center; on each side were wooden platforms raised 18 inches from the floor. These platforms provided about 24 square feet of living and sleeping space for each man. At first we slept on these wooden platforms, huddled together under the ersatz blankets for warmth; later we were given some straw with which to fill a narrow cotton tick. The lumps of straw seemed to remain as a source of discomfort until they were worn down, at which point the boards beneath became again manifest as the insulating qualities diminished.

The days and nights became one long misery of wet and cold. The shivering became so prolonged that muscles ached and grew tired. Outside was muddy quagmire, the puddles fringed with ice. Getting to the latrine was an effort especially at night. With the little food and continued cold, the night calls were frequent. At first there were few things we could do to relieve our misery. Twenty or so would crowd into a small room, trying to raise the temperature a few degrees by concentrating our body heat. A few found some clay bricks which they took to the galley to bake in the fires and then to wrap in their blankets at night. Many of the bricks were so water logged that they remained full of moisture after

the roasting. They were cozily warm at the time of retirement but as the night wore on and they cooled, their moisture condensed and the sleeper awoke to a cold and soggy blanket! On occasion when the sun came through the almost continual cloud cover, we would crowd into the sunshine to soak up every stray sunbeam. Above all, the most sustaining warmth came from "tea" (willow twigs soaked in hot water) given us four times daily. Of course, drinking it merely caused increased urination problems, but for the moment it was pleasantly warm going down.

We had been in camp hardly two weeks when the first escape attempt was made. Commander Cunningham, Commander Columbo Smith, a Yangtze River pilot who as a reserve officer had commanded the river gunboat U.S.S. Wake, Lieutenant Commander Wooley, a British naval officer of great vigor and resolution, and Dan Teters, who had been in charge of Wake Island construction, with a Chinese "boy" were successful in eluding sentries, digging under the electrified fence, and made their way some miles through the countryside south of Shanghai. They had several hours of freedom before the Japs discovered them missing at morning head count. Unfortunately, Smith

did not have the good connections with the Chinese that he thought he had. They were turned in by the local Chinese for the monetary reward given by the Japs. The Chinese had additional incentive for their act; the Japs let it be known that anyone with knowledge of the escapees who withheld such knowledge would be summarily executed. I had been appointed barracks adjutant by Major Devereux and, as such, was held responsible by the Japs for any escapes. This time, again, it was not necessary for me to lie; I knew nothing of the escape plans. After some questioning, I was warned not to let it happen again.

Some days later the escapees were paraded through the camp with their hands wired behind their backs and with the wire looped up around their necks, as a warning to the rest of us. Wooley still managed a spirited thumbs up gesture to tell us he had not been broken. Yet, it was apparent to us that we were in an almost escape proof situation; not because of the two electrified fences and the constant patrolling, but because we could not expect to gain the assistance of the local Chinese. A European or American could not escape detection in the flat, open terrain that formed the river estuary, our walk was distinct from

from that of the natives. Farther into the interior of China where the Chinese Communists controlled we might expect some help but that was a good two hundred miles away through unfriendly territory, and very populous at that.

The Japs now redoubled their efforts at preventing any escapes. At night we heard Colonel Yuse on his rounds of the sentries, his high pitched voice screamed warnings at the sentries lest they be negligent. His trek around the camp perimeter could be followed by the sounds of his near hysteria. He had lost face. A second electrified fence was erected close to the barracks, at points no farther than a yard from exit doors, a great hazard to anyone of a clumsy nature, for the wires carried 1100 volts. It was deadly also for the occasional cat that brushed against it, a source of protein for the ever hungry Pows who found the unfortunate animal.

The stress became too great for Colonel Yuse for he suddenly died. His passing brought us relief not only from his constant harassment but also in the form of a small feast. He, being a good Buddhist, had willed each of us a small bowl full of peanuts. It was a welcome respite from the watery rice and dark stew.

He was succeeded by Colonel Otera, a more genial appearing person with a large flowing mustache. He became known as Handlebar Hank. His geniality was deceptive for he was so relaxed that usually he relinquished his command to the unstable whims of the chief interpreter, Ishihara. Most of the officers in Colonel Otera's staff spoke English very hesitantly. Captain Endo, the doctor, was most fluent. He was very tall for a Jap (nearly six feet) but he was very quiet and withdrawn. This left the quite fluent Ishihara free to express the workings of his unstable mind on the prisoners. He had learned English in the United States. The more fluent Japs we encountered had all been educated in American colleges, and they were usually vindictive, not because of any ill treatment they had received in the U.S.A. but because they were jealous of our more prosperous society. Ishihara spoke with an American accent, as did most Japs. At one time he was having difficulty understanding a British prisoner, he commented, "You British really f— up the English language."

Ishihara took over the task of censoring all mail. Sometimes when he was otherwise occupied, he let the mail sit for months. We were given opportunity to write a postcard or one page letter

about once every six months. After he found that our friends and relatives were not mailing secret information with which to combat the Imperial War machine, Ishihara settled down to improving our morals. In one instance a girl friend had sealed her letter with the imprint of her lips in lipstick. Ishihara called the prisoner recipient to his office; then showed him the letter with the lip imprint at a distance and, without letting the prisoner read the letter, put a match to it. Then he followed with a long sermon on the immorality of Americans. He informed the prisoner that he would be allowed to write a letter home only if he wrote a note to his girl reproaching her for her immorality.

This interest in the incoming mail gave me an opportunity to send out a coded warning to my wife in my first letter. We had arranged before my trip to Midway Island in mid-1941 that if circumstances warranted a secret communication I would do it by arranging the message to be read vertically from the second word (the first letter of that word to be used) of each line of the letter. I would not use the first letter of the first word of each line because it was possible that the message would be too obvious.

Well, in February of 1942, a reason for use of my code became obvious. The Japs began a strong interrogation program of prisoners who had been on Midway Island. They determined who such prisoners were from the administrative records they had found on Wake Island. The interrogation was intense and the Japs seemed so much more interested in gaining information about Midway than in just torturing prisoners that they served tea, cakes and cigarettes at the sessions with individual prisoners. Only one prisoner was mistreated at this time; that was Chief Yellow Hair, a Sioux Indian who had enlisted in the U.S. Marines. Because of his physiognomy, the Japs were certain he was an unfaithful kin, and were very upset that he would provide no information. He was hit and pushed around, but his only comment was, "Those yellow sonsa bitches!"

It was quite obvious that they had very serious intentions regarding Midway. And then they told us we could write our first one-page letter home. I began a very complex process of composing that letter. It would have been relatively easy to send a coded message if I gave little consideration to the message I also

wanted to send of concern and affection for my wife. I wrote and rewrote my letter several times until finally it was an expressive letter and yet carried the hidden warning, "WATCH MIDWAY." I knew that if the Jap censor found that message, my head and shoulders would soon be separated. They weren't and so I assume it went through. Nearly four years later when I returned home, I found that my wife had saved the half dozen letters I had been allowed to write. They were all there in the pack but that first one. She had no recollection of having received it. I can only assume that it was intercepted by the American censor who did find the hidden message and sent it to our intelligence office. At least I can hope it contributed in a small way to the later victory at Midway.

Shortly thereafter we were informed that we would be able to record a short message to be transmitted via radio to the U.S.A. The Japs did not use wire recorders but used wax discs. There was much preliminary discussion among us as to the pros and cons of making such recordings. We realized that the Japs were not being nice guys, but that they intended to use our messages for propaganda purposes.

We decided that if in our individual messages we

could plant a statement that superficially was innocuous or even positive from the Jap view point but which would reveal to those who knew us personally or were aware of American cultural quirks, that all was not sweetness and light in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, then the recording would be justified. Examples would be in the case of a man whose normal weight was 160 pounds, a casual mention of his weight still being 130 would contradict Jap propaganda that prisoners were well fed; or, if a prisoner was known by his friends to harbor hatred for a Fred Flynn, then he might report that he had come to love the Japs as much as he did dear old Fred Flynn. There were almost as many ways to conceal a statement uncomplimentary to the Japs as there were prisoners.

Well, the recordings were made. We were amazed when we returned home to find that our news services, without checking with our friends and relatives, had been reporting our messages as statements reflecting the beneficence of the Japs. I have noticed this tendency of the news media to report, without checking out the story, any juicy tid-bit that comes their way. I saw it later in the Korean "Police Action" where broadcasts by prisoners of the

North Koreans were treated superficially by the news media and false conclusions were drawn as to the loyalty of prisoners. I believe there are few areas of understanding where it is so very necessary to have been there to understand motivations.

During the first few months of our imprisonment, the Japs were anxious to tell us the war news; it was mostly favorable to them. We were given the Shanghai newspapers and few cheap radios, capable only of picking up the local Jap controlled news. At first, everything seemed to be going their way and we couldn't believe that this was so, even though we knew better than most Americans what a disaster Pearl Harbor had been. We found that by changing the coils in the radios, we could convert them to short-wave reception and thereby pick up the Allied news broadcasts from Chungking. This was done initially by marine aviator, Lt. John Kinney.

It was interesting to compare the news from Chungking with that of the local stations. When Doolittle made his famous raid over Tokyo, we learned from the Japs that the American planes had taken off from a carrier and that damage inflicted was minimal. Some time later, the Allied broadcasts said that a great amount of damage had been inflicted and that

the Japs were hysterical because they didn't know where the planes had been based; President Roosevelt was chuckling at their confusion and suggesting that the planes took off from Shangri-la. We learned to splice the propaganda from both sides so as to arrive at the truth. There was a Russian news station in Shanghai but they confined their subject matter to the German-Russian front. If one knew Russian geography, it was all too evident that their splendid victories were occurring farther and farther to the east.

We heard furtive whispers about some form of radio being operated by Lt. John Kinney in apparent association with two North China officers, Lts. M. Brayer and Huixenga. I still don't know what the operation was like or who did what. At first we heard bits of what was said to be good American based news. The bits and pieces became less and less. We had the impression that senior officers were still getting the news, and then there was no more. It was very frustrating not to be in on the Allied news reports, although at the time they were not very promising.

I knew that the persons operating a clandestine radio had to be very circumspect about the distribution of the news. Some of the prisoners were not very wise in

communicating their knowledge of Jap losses to the Jap sentries, a way of playfully taunting them. They, of course, reported such information to their superiors. The result was frequent shakedowns as they searched for the forbidden radio. Why and when John Kinney et al ceased operations I don't know but since we weren't getting the news, John McAlister and I decided to do something about it.

As news of the Pacific War became less favorable for the Japs, the newspapers were gradually withheld; then the radios were taken back. In my youth I had some interest in amateur radio and had been involved in the early stages of crystal sets. I was searching for a way to construct a simple crystal set and learned (I had forgotten) from Captain Herb Fresler the formula for determining the number of turns in a coil to pick up a given frequency. We, McAlister and I, found a round box about the size of a Quaker Oatmeal box, two tin cans which fit one within the other, and a length of Jap telephone wire. A piece of paper around the smaller can and then inserted into the larger provided a variable condenser. We stripped the wire of its steel reinforcing wires and found the remaining copper wires

to be quite suitable for coil winding. We yet lacked an earphone and a crystal pickup. The earphone problem was solved by stealing one from a Jap truck radio. (We had tried unsuccessfully to make one.) However, there were no crystals around. I knew that a galena crystal was lead sulphide and so we went to the Jap dispensary and stole some sulphur. (The Japs had three medicines: aspirin, charcoal and sulphur.) A piece of lead pipe was found in a shed. I shaved the lead into slivers, mixed it with the sulphur, put the mixture into a thimble-like container, and then put that in small can filled with sand. This was placed in the middle of a hot fire. From this came a galena crystal to which I fitted a piece of the steel wire as a tickler.

We were successful in hearing the local Shanghai stations, including the French station which was Vichy controlled and worse in propaganda than the Jap stations. I did find the newscast in French fascinating; the voice was that of an extremely sultry female and although I could not understand it, I was lured into listening. The Russian station was located in the most distant section of Shanghai and its frequency was at the bottom of the dial. We were anxious to pick it up for although they gave news only

of their own war with Germany (news of the Pacific war would not have pleased the Japs) even that news gave an indication of the way things were going generally. But we just couldn't get the Russian station. This led to our decision to find or make a short-wave set. This enterprise occupied the better part of a year.

In the meanwhile we were moved several miles closer to Shanghai, from Woosong to Kiangwan. There was little difference in the two camps; the barracks were old, unpainted shed-type wooden buildings. The wooden planks were loosely nailed to the studs and, in many places, had come loose. This condition provided hiding places for contraband; the Japs would have had to level the buildings in any thorough search for hidden items. The prisoners had fashioned hundreds of knives and hid them away behind loose planks, available for a possible desperation battle. There were rumors of grenades and handguns hidden away for an Armageddon.

The accepted reason for the change of camp was to make the prisoners more available for work projects. There were many of these which were short lived for the recalcitrant prisoners made it appear to the Japs that they were so incompetent that the jobs were badly botched. The Japs

frequently expressed amazement at how well Americans did so many things but were so stupid about the simple things the Japs did so well. One of the earliest attempts to organize the prisoners into work units came as a ground clearing project, presumably to prepare an area for farming. All prisoners were assembled, then divided into three groups. One group were issued shovels, another received picks, and the third were given the oriental version of a hoe. Then the prisoners were lined up in alternate rows of shovels, picks and hoes. The camp commander and his staff then positioned themselves in front of the prisoners, the interpreter between. After five minutes of harangue in Japanese which was translated as, "You must now work," the commander raised his riding crop and as he brought it down smartly, we were ordered to "Now Dig." The prisoners looked at one another questioningly, hiding the smiles of incredulity, some raising their tools hesitantly and bringing them down with little disturbance to the good earth. At this evidence of poor discipline and non-compliance with his orders, the colonel fell into a rage. Whereupon all prisoners began to raise and lower their tools in a mechanical manner but

remaining in place. The shovelers were in the most difficult situation for there were no instructions as to how they should dispose of the earth they picked up, whereas the hoes and picks were struck repeatedly at the same spot as though each had a deadly snake writhing before them.

The Japs learned that to get a job done it was better to give the prisoners very general instructions and then leave them to their own devices. This gave the Japs a sense of accomplishment which would look good on their reports to Tokyo but, in fact, most jobs were sabotaged to some degree. One crew was taken to the Kiangwan Race course which was being used as a fuel depot. The fuel was ethanol (rumored to have been produced by the fermentation of pineapples) which was mixed with some gasoline to provide aviation fuel. It was the prisoners job to bury 50 gallon drums of ethanol in the ground to protect it from air attack. The prisoners proved exceptionally clumsy with picks which occasionally punctured the drums and allowed a tapping of the contents. Some of this was carried back to camp in bottles but after the guards at the gate discovered the bootlegging (more accurately trouser-

(legging since the bottles were suspended in the legs of trousers) and the culprits were badly beaten and thrown in the boxes that passed for a brig, more devious methods of transport of the alcohol were evolved. The most popular contraption was an inner tube cut down and vulcanized to fit around the waist and having necessary filling and emptying plugs. These were made by men working in the garage in exchange for some of the alcohol brought in. After alcohol is agitated in a rubber tube it acquires a taste quite unlike that gained from charcoaled oak kegs. One swig convinced me that I would never acquire a taste for it. The traffic in alcohol continued until one of the men, who had been unable to make a deal for a modified inner tube, stole a hot water bottle from the dispensary and used that as a container, presumably on the assumption that to bring in alcohol was safe if it was done with a rubber container.

Well, he got greedy, filled the bag so full that it bulged conspicuously and was identified as a rum runner by the gate guard. After he was given the normal preliminary roughing up and thrown in the brig, he was brought before the colonel whose foremost concern was, not the alcohol, but that the hot water bottle (obviously Japanese from its

markings) had been stolen from his command. This was *prima facie* lost face. The prisoner explained that while he was on Wake Island he had a severe case of rheumatism for which a hot water bottle was provided by the very humanitarian Jap commander on Wake. This explanation was accepted and questioning turned to the reason for bringing alcohol into camp. (Again no question about the actual theft of alcohol since that was some other person's loss of face.) The by now quite crippled prisoner explained he needed the alcohol to rub on his sore joints. He couldn't be forgiven entirely; he was sentenced to the brig but with all his clothes and blankets (very unusual) and with a full ration of food (very, very unusual), and the hot water bottle. Stories such as this made their way about camp daily to the discredit of the Japs and served to lighten the existence of all prisoners.

Another project which the prisoners resisted as much as possible was an artillery shell polishing job. Some sheds just outside the compound had been set up for refinishing of brass cartridges for reuse. The POW's complained this was contrary to the Geneva Convention since it was work which contributed directly to the war

effort. However, the Japs responded that Japan had never signed the Geneva Convention and furthermore existing international law had been contrived by Anglo-Americans and that now Japan was establishing its own concept of international law. The polishing detail did not last more than a few months, presumably because Tokyo began to receive complaints from field units about the quality of the cartridges.

The worst work detail was known as "Fuji." The Japs announced the POWs were to construct a huge mound of earth in the manner of Mt. Fuji as a war memorial. As work progressed, it became evident that the end result was probably to be a rifle range butt. Protests were to no avail. It was back breaking work for the earth was moved by primitive oriental methods, in woven baskets slung between two poles supported on the shoulders of two men, and in small trucks on tracks that led up the incline and pushed by the men. Ishihara took charge, using carrot and stick methods to increase the amount of earth moved each day. Work norms were constantly increased. The food ration, already at starvation levels, was decreased. Many men began to suffer deficiency diseases; both beri beri and pellagra were common and the eventual condition for many was tuberculosis. There was

a high rate of malaria, and although this did not come from diet deficiency, it aggravated the conditions resulting from it. Men who became so ill that they could not fall out for work details were placed on rations still further reduced. In effect this did not happen completely for the Japs controlled only the total amount of food and the lesser amount was divided equally among all. To aid those on sick lists, the Japs posted notices stating that illness was a self-induced condition and that if a man would only "think well" he would be well. The medical profession does recognize that a poor mental state and a loss of will can have adverse physical results but the usual assumption is that the person is otherwise well nourished and in a healthy environment, neither of which conditions existed at Kiangwan.

Although the Jap dispensary stocked only three medications: sulphur for skin conditions, charcoal for stomach and intestinal problems, and aspirin for everything else, there were field hospitals for surgery cases. The first man to develop appendicitis was taken to one of these. Our doctors attended as visitors. After the operation they were determined to organize a surgical operating room of their own. They had seen Jap doctors in the operating room with rubber boots

moving about on a muddy floor and an inexperienced surgeon in cotton gloves performing a brief operation that became unduly long trying to locate the appendix for 45 minutes until a senior surgeon walked in unwashed to reach into the cavity and lift out the appendix for disposal.

It was December 1943 when Johnny McAlistair came down with appendicitis and Dr. Kahn decided that he and a doctor from the North China marines would operate. The supplies and equipment were extremely primitive. Although there was no heat in the operating room, a stove would have been counter-indicated for the anesthesia was by ether. The operating table was a board mess table and the light came from a single bulb suspended from the ceiling. The bulb served a dual purpose, not only a light but also warmth to the surgeons hands as he occasionally lifted them from the task at hand to cup them about the hot bulb. Johnny Mac survived. It was extremely cold and I loaned him a comforter which I had acquired by bartering with a sailor from the S.S. Harrison. It was the one time I had known him to accept a sacrifice from someone. Usually it was the other way around; he often gave from his own meager rations to someone in distress even though his once slender body had dwindled to a skeleton. He

was cold.

The Japs were very concerned with sanitation and disease prevention but they lacked the material means and knowledge to raise their endeavors above the primitive. Of course there were world renowned Jap scientists and medical researchers but the knowledge stopped with them and did not filter down. The toilet facilities were open back houses with multiple squat holes over large earthenware "honey pots." These were emptied periodically by Chinese who carried off the "honey" to fertilize their fields. In the meanwhile, the excrement was attractive to flies and rats. While one squatted over the 8"x14" opening, flies buzzed around one's head and rats scampered here and there in search of rare tid bits. At the beginning of the fly season the Japs ordered that every prisoner must sweat and turn in three flies daily. The prisoners, who were accustomed to more sophisticated measures of fly control, greeted the order with dismission and the turn-in was not satisfactory. Barracks leaders were held accountable for the shortage, given the Jap version of a reprimand which included slapping and pushing, and finally the food ration was reduced. Then, since the stick didn't work, the carrot was brought out in the offer of one cigarette for ten dead flies. The

response was immediate. All the flies disappeared and a blue nicotine haze floated over the camp. But not for long. The flies were never an endangered species and as the season warmed, the Japs manipulated the fly-cigarette ratio to one hundred to one. Even with an abundance of flies, the effort to secure one cigarette was too much and the process was abandoned. It was evident, however, that had the prisoners displayed a greater spirit of Bushido, the Jap procedure might have worked.

Many of the Jap efforts to indoctrinate the prisoners in manpower procedures worked only for a brief time before the POWs sabotaged the effort. There was a somewhat similar effort at rat catching. At first the prisoners responded by catching hundreds of rats. A game evolved wherein the rats were placed in tubs of water and bets were placed as to which rat would swim the longest. Eventually the prisoners tired of the game and when it became evident that the whole Whangpoo estuary (possibly even the whole of China) was resupplying the camp, the program was discontinued by default.

The most prevalent disease was malaria. Although the Japs did provide nettings to sleep under (one of the few areas in which they exhibited concern for the prisoners) it was impossible to escape all the mosquitoes after

sundown. It was estimated by the doctors that 90% of the prisoners suffered from malaria. The effects were particularly devastating to the health of men already suffering nutritional deficiency diseases. Although most were on the same diet, with variations according to a man's ingenuity, there were considerable variations in the degree of illness.

Vaccines or anti-toxins were made available. The Japs were extremely fearful of typhoid, small pox, cholera and dysentery. They feared that if an epidemic broke out among the prisoners, they too would become affected. The serum used for typhoid fever was very severe in the reactions suffered. Typhoid inoculations brought about an almost complete collapse of camp activity. Most of us suffered temperatures near 105° and an enormous swelling at the needle site. There was much doubt by the doctors as to the effectiveness of the cholera and dysentery shots.

During 1943 the American doctors received some medical supplies through the International Red Cross. There were some sulfa drugs which were valuable during surgery and some which were effective against intestinal ailments. There were also small quantities of vitamins. Usage of vitamins was restricted to those already suffering pellagra, beri beri etc. It was found that vitamin pills of

themselves did little to ameliorate the deficiency conditions. It was necessary to provide food on which to base the pills as a supplement. The food was not provided. While we were in China, the primary vegetable was daikon, a large white-yellow radish, augmented in summer months by the few vegetables which the officers were able to grow on the farm which was their "voluntary" work area. We received two small bowls of rice daily. The quality of the rice varied considerably; often it contained large quantities of hulls which we found almost impossible to pick out and, at times, small bits of gravel and even chips of glass. For a period of time cracked wheat was substituted for the rice. We learned from inspection of the bags the wheat was part of a shipment from America to aid the Chinese during one of the great famines of the 1930's. It had been waylaid by profiteers and stored in a go-down too long. When the Japs finally found it, it was moldy and full of weavils. But it was cooked and we ate it. One of our jokes was that it was very easily possible to determine how long a man had been a POW by his attitude toward this cracked wheat and weevil combination. A short timer would turn away from the disgusting sight of dead weavils sprinkled like bits of coconut over the

cereal; a man with more time as a P.O.W. would pick out the weavils and eat the cereal; but the long time POW would eat it all and then reach for the weavils discarded by others — weavils were protein.

Then for a while we had "bread" instead of rice. This the Japs said they were doing because bread was our natural food. However, it turned out that the bread was not of a recipe we were accustomed to eating at home. We found that when we tried to overcome its strange taste by toasting it, it caught fire very easily — it was in part wood fiber. Years later, American bakeries, in response to a health food fad, would add cellulose fiber to the bread; it has some possible benefit for those who ingest quantities of fat and sugar. This was not one of our problems. After a few months of ersatz bread, we were back on rice sweepings.

During our imprisonment we received about three shipments of Red Cross food boxes. I believe each of us received about six boxes, each containing about a half cubic foot of assorted food items. More than this came into camp but the Japs confiscated much of the shipments. We know this because we received individual packages of cheese, similar to the ones sent in the boxes. The

Japs hated cheese.

Cigarettes were included and became the universal medium of exchange. A higher value was commonly assigned to some brands than to others. Camels and Lucky Strikes rated highest, then came Chesterfields and Old Golds, with Raleighs rated well below the others. Chocolate bars from the Canadian boxes rated very high; one small square of chocolate could stave off hunger pangs and allow one to fall asleep feeling rather comfortable.

Never was the hold of nicotine on the cigarette addict more vividly seen than in the prison camp conditions. Here where a bit more food might mean the difference between life and death, there were many who chose to barter not only the food items from the boxes but also their meager Jap issued rations for a few Camels, or even Raleighs. There was a momentary satisfaction from a cigarette that overcame hunger pangs but eventually the smoker suffered the consequences, usually tuberculosis. If ever there were conditions which called for quitting the habit, the prison camp was it; yet many addicts felt even more than before the need for a nicotine fix.

All POWs did not share equally in nutritional hardships.

A few weeks after the Wake Island Marines and civilian internees had arrived in camp, great excitement developed with the arrival of the North China Marines, who, in great contrast, arrived in heavy woolen clothing, overcoats, and fur hats. They were accompanied by trunks and suitcases of additional warm clothing, supplies of food, medicine and even a quantity of medicinal alcohol. This group had formed the Legation Guard at Peking and a smaller detachment at Tientsin. They believed they were entitled to diplomatic immunity and would be repatriated as soon as the proper channels were cleared. Hence, their mental attitude toward the camp conditions was that it was only a temporary inconvenience. For a time the Japs seemed undecided as to the status of these marines and were careful not to confiscate the many luxuries.

In the meanwhile, Major Devereux, trying to bring up the Wake Islanders' morale, tried organizing his officers and men into schools. The officers and some well educated men were told to prepare to hold classes in subjects which they considered themselves best qualified to teach. The men then selected subjects and schedules were drawn up. It was a good effort to give the group a sense of belonging.

Some divisiveness had developed as a result of a lack of common goals and activities. The actual educational benefit was minimal because of the lack of materials, writing paper and pencils, books and common skills. However, the school was short lived for the Jap work programs became increasingly preemptive.

The Japs, too, decided to hold school - in the Jap language. Prior to this, I had made an effort to learn Japanese and was progressing well in Katakana and Hirakana alphabets. However, as soon as they ordered us to learn their language, all efforts ceased. They also contributed to the failure of the program by failing to provide materials, books or tutors after an initial spurt of enthusiasm. After that most of us acquired only an essential vocabulary of words related to food, counting, and creature physical requirements. A high percentage of Japs, including Formosan auxiliaries, had a basic understanding of English.

Our first attempts at keeping warm were a matter of concentrating our body heat in as small a space as possible, and then crowding in. Eventually we found enough old cans and sheet metal to fabricate little stoves. We looked

through the lap ash pile for unburned coals; then three or four would gather around, put a blanket over our heads and saturate ourselves with heat and suffocating sulphurous fumes. Such stoves were forbidden and so we cut trap doors in the floor through which we lowered the stove to the earth about two feet below if the characteristic lap footsteps sounded outside. There were occasions when an alarm was sounded and we lowered a flaming stove and covered it with kindling dry floorboards, at great peril to the entire building. At great peril to ourselves too had we been caught for the Japs were extremely concerned about fire prevention.

Eventually we began to tap into the 220 volt wires that ran through the overhead of the buildings. At first we dropped two connecting wires down between the wall boards, drove nails into the wall to serve ostensibly as coat hooks, and then whenever a bucket of hot water was desired, two heavy wire drops from the nails into the water created a boiling cauldron in a short time. We flirted with electrocution many times. We often wondered what would happen if a Jap inspector should happen to back into the two nails which remained live at all times.

A prisoner working in the Jap garage found some resistance wire for which we traded cigarettes and even some of our very precious chocolate. The earth of the area was very heavy clay which we shaped and grooved to hold the coiled wire to form a hot plate. The hot plate provided a means not only of cooking surreptitiously acquired food and of limited heating but also of heating soldering irons for other secretive productions such as a short wave radio.

The result of all this activity in use of the electricity caused the meters in the headquarters building to spin their wheels. Colonel Otera was admonished to find the cause of excessive usage. He concluded that there was a leakage from the electric fence; grass cutting details were sent out to eliminate any grass contact with the fence. Yet the meters continued to whirl. Finally one of the American electricians was brought in for consultation. The solution was to by-pass the meters. No further concern was reported by headquarters or Colonel Otera, and the prisoners continued to enjoy the benefits of Shanghai Electric.

Treatment of prisoners varied considerably. Jap guards and interpreters were easily aroused to a fury that involved

clubbing and beating on the spot. There were more refined and contemplative forms of punishment such as the water cure (refined by the Japs as a "tea" cure) and the thumb rack (wherein the hand was tied down and the thumb was pulled back by a cord on a ratchet wheel.) Then there were official punishments such as being confined in a small box as a brig with reduced rations and bedding. One who received a month of such confinement might emerge so depleted that he soon fell victim to a fatal illness such as tuberculosis.

Then there were punishments that seemed almost humorous, such as the one Johnny M^o and I were given for being caught with a radio (make that a crystal set.) It came about because we had grown tired of Jap propaganda we were getting on the crystal set. We brought a Sergeant Mohr, a communications N.C.O. in our plans for his technical skill. I had a basic knowledge of radio technology but through lack of use I had forgotten many of the details. We set about acquiring as many of the parts as possible through theft from Jap trucks. There was much improvisation. Our soldering iron was formed from a Chinese silver dollar bent into shape. We tried several means of reducing voltages from a home made water rheostat to a cement block into

which we mixed powdered graphite. The winding of coils with the proper number of turns became a hit or miss project. I spent innumerable hours in one of the latrine stalls over a stinking honey pot in mid-summer because that was the best place to hide while wrapping a variety of number of turns in coils. Finally, after eight months on the project, working at it during every spare minute, we had built a radio, about 8" x 6" x 3", with one headphone, grounded, but with no outside antenna. Our reward came on New Year's Eve of 1944, while I was making some minor adjustments, I heard a voice say, "This is San Francisco, (time) Pacific WarTime." It was the biggest thrill of my POW war years. Later we even picked up St. Louis. Whenever we worked on the radio or operated it, we were careful to post sentries at either end of the building. The Japs had a habit of coming on the run when they were making a "shakedown" or surprise inspection. The distinctive clatter of their steel cobbled shoes gave ample warning, even at night, to our sentries.

We kept the short-wave set hidden in the wall partition behind one of the many loose boards in the same way we hid the crystal set. At first we were rather liberal in telling others the news. But it became apparent from

the increased numbers of searches and questions by the Japs that they were aware of a radio in camp. They learned this because some prisoners privy to the news could not resist teasing the guards with comments about American victories. The Jap searches became so frequent we were forced to shut down for a while. When we finally did begin listening again we were at loss to understand the European situation, the Allies were much farther back than when we ceased listening. We had missed the Battle of the Bulge.

Then the Jap shake downs ceased and we became careless about posting sentries. One noon, Johnny M^{rs} and I had both sets, the crystal and the short wave, out of their caches for some adjustments. He failed to post sentries. Suddenly we heard the clatter of Jap shoes. Instinctively, we got the short wave set hidden before the Japs burst in. There for all to see was the crystal set, minus the headphones. It looked like something that merry makers might tie on to the rear of a bride and groom's getaway car. Wires ran to and from the two tin cans and over to a cylindrical box wrapped with more wires.

For some time they just looked, pointed and acted very strange, very puzzled about what they saw. They repeatedly asked if it was a radio, which we denied, saying

that it was only a crystal set. This apparently did not translate easily into Japanese for they asked the question over and over. Finally they gathered up the mess of wires and cans and left. The next day we were summoned into the office of the camp commander. Again we were asked if it were a radio and we as firmly denied it was anything more than a crystal set. There was some angry pushing and cutting by Ishihara, who was becoming quite frustrated. Fortunately at this time the Japs were undergoing a period of humanitarianism and decided not to exercise an arbitrary form of Jap discipline. Instead they sent for Major Brown to inquire as to what punishment the Marine Corps used on young officers as discipline. They were told the punishment usually was from one to ten days in hack; the officer being required to spend the time in his room, not allowed to perform any duties, and an entry in his record. At the time Johnny Mac had been appointed barracks adjutant and the Japs held adjutant's responsible for anything that went wrong in their barracks. I heard nothing further, but McAlister was again summoned to receive his punishment; ten days restriction to the barracks, out of the rain, with time to work on the short-wave set.

Presumably we both still have a black mark in Jap record books.

There was one exception made by the Japs in their administration of discipline; that was for the mentally ill. One man was sitting with a group near the fence when a guard made a sound of disapproval; another man went over seemingly joking with the guard, the rifle discharged (accidentally said the Japs) and the man bled to death. The first man seeing this went into a trance, repeating "blood, blood, blood." After this, he needed constant help. Wherever he appeared the Japs would step aside to let him pass. Another man was aware of his problem but was unable to change it. He had seen a man electrocuted on the fence. Now he was fearful of going through the gateway of the fence, even when the electricity was off. He could go through only with his eyes covered, head down and guided by friends. He too was never bothered by the guards. The Japs never struck or even tried to control the aberrant actions of these men. One such man picked up a stick and swung it violently against a squad marching to post a guard; they ran to avoid his blows and made no attempt to counter them. As the camp commander was

was making an inspection of a barracks, a man drew two concentric circles with a chalk on the floor. He then stood at the center and as the colonel approached, he pointed his finger and proclaimed, "You yellow bastard, you can come in the first circle but don't you come in the second one." The colonel came in neither. This attitude of the Japs seemed to parallel closely that of many early American Indians who avoided injury to any mentally deranged person.

As the Americans advanced across the Pacific, we became the recipients of American air attacks. From 1943 on I was often awakened at night as my overly sensitive ears picked up the distant drone of a B-24 following the river to targets in the Shanghai area. As time passed we became the center of P-51 attacks made against the airfields around us. In one memorable attack, the prisoners were outside enjoying a day of freedom from work details when three Sap planes, their copy of the DC-3, took off and started to circle the camp just as the air raid siren sounded. Almost at once several P-51's attacked the DC-3's and as three balls of fire slowly circled and then plunged to earth, an enormous cheer, sounding like that following a football touch down, arose from among the prisoners.

The Japs were taken completely by surprise. Usually we were herded inside as soon as sirens sounded. Then while the P-51's flew back and forth skimming the roof tops, the anti-aircraft fire crackling all around us, the guards began to drive us back into the buildings. Prisoners who failed to move as quickly as the guards wished were bayoneted, though none fatally. The Japs became nearly hysterical during the air raid, but as soon as it was over, some of those who had been free with their bayonets came around among the POW's to express their admiration for the P-51's, saying, "P-51, OK!"

Early in 1945, we began to receive visits from high flying B-29's during daylight hours. We had heard of B-29's on our radio and so we recognized the bomber that appeared one morning as the sirens started to wail. It was a single plane in the northeastern sky and then moved in a great wide circle to the southwest and then to the southeast out of reach of the intense anti aircraft fire and the many Zeroes that scrambled. Just as it passed overhead, bombs were dropped that we later learned had hit near Shanghai Electric. As it passed from view, a second B-29 appeared in the same spot, followed the track and bombing pattern of the first, followed by a succession of planes on the same track. This

went on for about four hours, the initial intense activity of the Jap defenses decreasing to complete passivity.

We were observers, and in the middle, of a very intense P-51 attack again at Easter of 1945. We later learned that this was part of the strategic support for the Okinawa landings.

The Japs became quite uneasy as the American forces moved closer. There were frequent shakedowns. The prisoners made more knives and when these were found, more inspections were stimulated. Then brush was placed along the end barracks. We had heard on our radio that this was the procedure employed to set fire to prison buildings before machine gunning escaping prisoners. Our suspicions were reinforced when it was learned that guards were training with machine guns for the first time. The Formosan guards, more gentle than Japs, were replaced.

President Roosevelt symbolized to the Japs all that they hated and were fighting against, much as Hitler and Tojo were the targets of American outrage. They believed if they could only put an end to Roosevelt, all their problems would go away. When Roosevelt died, it was a moment of high hopes for the Japs. One of the guards approached a

group of POWs with the news, smiling in anticipation of their acceptance of defeat. One of them asked him if he knew who would succeed to the presidency. He replied, "Truman, but who Truman?" The POW replied that Truman was a gangster from Missouri. The guard asked no further questions but took off at a run to the Jap headquarters to relay this latest bad news.

In late April 1945 we learned that the Japs had decided to keep us to the bitter end. Steel freight cars were moved in to a local siding. Then we were marched over in dress rehearsal to check out the Jap loading plans. Each of us had been assigned by name to a given numbered car. There were forty prisoners to a car, twenty in each end and behind barbed wire strung so that two guards might occupy the space in the center. The cars were small, narrow gauge railway cars, so small that it was not possible for all to lie down at the same time even though we arranged ourselves head to foot. Each end of the car was provided a five gallon can as a latrine in the corner. There were at each corner an open iron barred window about two feet square. The sheet metal of the cars was dotted with bullet holes, apparently .50 caliber fired by strafing aircraft; not too reassuring when we knew that Jap trains between Nanking

and Peking were frequently attacked.

When we returned to camp after the rehearsal, there was a stirring of excitement among some of the officers who were assigned to the car next to mine. Among this group was McAlister and I learned from him that the iron bars were missing from one window in his car. The Japs had instructed the prisoners to string some barbed wire across the window. This they did very carefully to insure its easy removal. Now they were busy bartering for compact food items, such as chocolate, acquiring small bottles for water and preparing as well as possible for a trek through China.

The next morning we boarded the train. In the next car the prisoners were busily arranging a blanket across the latrine corner; their modesty required a measure of privacy and, besides, the window with the barbed wire was in that corner too.

The trip up the river bank to Nanking was uneventful. It was an area held strongly by the Japs. The Chinese were well subjugated. But as we turned north to Peking, there was a different look in the eyes of the Chinese who gathered to see us pass through at stations; there was a friendly twinkle. The train was travelling more slowly now,

sometimes to a walk, or even stopped. There was sabotage of the rails and at night it was necessary to move cautiously. The greatest speed was about 15 miles per hour, often much slower. This gave the escape minded prisoners their opportunity. One by one, while the guard nodded in the center of the car, five of the prisoners (one was a Lt. Bishop of the Flying Tigers) arose to disappear behind the curtains. Sometime later the relieving guard found the head count was off. The train was stopped, Jap officers and NCO's came raging through the cars, swinging their swords viciously as they walked all over sleeping prisoners, cutting down any packages suspended overhead. For several hours we waited as scouting parties searched unsuccessfully for the escapees. Johnny Mac told me after the war that he was picked up that very night by Communist Chinese soldiers who escorted him to Chungking. Their hatred of the Japs was equalled only by their desire for the thousand dollar reward offered for return of Americans from Jap held areas. The offer was intended for the return of aviators downed in enemy territory but the Communists assumed a Marine was of equal value. M^r Alister was much impressed by the soldierly qualities of the Communists. His evaluation was to be later validated in the struggle.

between the Communists and the Kuomintang.

The remainder of the trip north was uneventful. At times the lack of drinking water was serious. There was no boiled water; we drank water intended for steam locomotives but only after we had laced it liberally with iodine. It tasted terrible but no one seemed to suffer ill effects.

At Peking (Peking) we were marched to a large storage building where we slept on the floor. The flies were abundant; the large open latrines near the building gave them reason to stay around. The food ration was cut even more, and we sought nourishment from worms, slugs, snakes or anything that moved. The guards were reinforced by Koreans who, possibly out of fear of the Japs, were tougher on us than the Japs.

Peking was only a way station until the Japs decided our ultimate disposition. There was no attempt to provide the barest of living accommodations. Sanitation was impossible. Tempers flared easily and there many fights caused by inevitable intrusions into the personal space that each tried to maintain. Because of their weakened condition, there was no serious injury inflicted.

After a month had passed, we were herded back into the freight cars; our fate had been decided in Tokyo. Food became almost a zero. At one stop while the locomotive took on a supply of boiler water, we were marched to a large open sand pit. There we were told to answer nature's call (whether or not her voice could be heard) and we all squatted to the great merriment of hundreds of Chinese who gathered around the rim of the pit to observe. When we returned to the cars we received a most memorable feast of bean cord stew and fresh roe still in the membrane. Then as we continued our journey, the train took a more southerly direction through a mountainous terrain. We guessed correctly that we were in Korea.

We arrived in Pusan in the midst of a driving rain storm. Our temporary barracks was no more than a mile from the railway but we arrived thoroughly soaked. In the barracks we were greeted by swarms of flies. I guess we smelled good. Any food was instantly covered by flies.

While we were in Pusan I witnessed a vivid example of Jap treatment of those subject to their rule. I had seen many examples of the slapping and clobbering of not only prisoners but also of subordinates. In this case, it was of

a young male Korean who just happened by. I could not discover what had so angered the Jap soldier; possibly the Korean had not bowed sufficiently. The Jap called him to attention, then picked up a heavy, silvered, muddy stick and beat him across the face with it, occasionally stopping to berate him, then continued the beating as blood flowed down the muddied face. This continued until the Jap's fury had been sated.

The next day we were marched to a medical unit where we were given physical exams. The exam was not to determine our well being except to discover any communicable diseases we might harbor. Their efficiency was remarkable for the manner of gaining stool specimens. As the man bent over, anus exposed, a slender glass rod with a cupped end was inserted and withdrawn with deft movements. We knew now, we were going to Japan.

Two days later, we were marched aboard a ferry boat, down several decks to the bottom, where again we were crowded to the point where it was impossible to do much but stand erect. It was swelteringly hot, and no water was available. We were crossing the Sea of Japan and we were aware that American submarines were plying those

waters while American planes bombed the seaports.

There were many civilians aboard in the upper decks. Their brightly colored clothing and apparent good humor, as though on a holiday cruise, were in striking contrast to the drab, animal-like condition we endured.

Our destination was Shimonoseki at the southern tip of Honshu, but because of American bombings there, the ferry was docked in a tree fringed inlet a few miles up the western coast. We spent the night in the auditorium of a village meeting house. At the back of the stage was a huge curtain and we were warned not to lift it or look behind it, for behind it was a picture of the Emperor. Whoever committed the sacrilege of gazing on his visage, would suffer death by beheading.

The next day we rode a local passenger train, the most comfortable part of our journey, to Shimonoseki. There we waited several hours to be crowded into passenger train cars, so crowded that it was necessary for some to sit on the backs of seats. The toilets, if one could get to them, were filthy.

We travelled up the coast, through Hiroshima to Osaka. Much of the area had been heavily industrialized and American

bombers had preceded us so there were flaming buildings on both sides of the tracks as far as the eye could see. The guards forbade our looking out the windows. The shades were pulled down but, under the crowded conditions, it was not possible for the guards to prevent peeking out the sides of the shades. The devastation was awesome.

On 3 July 1945 we arrived in Osaka and spent that night trying to sleep on the cobble stones of the street just outside the station. We expected to be among the recipients of an American Independence Day celebration but there was no air raid. The next day as we were hustled through Tokyo, it was obvious from the still burning buildings that our planes had celebrated at Tokyo instead. It was necessary to change trains in Tokyo and to walk through the streets to another station. It was my first experience being the butt of an attack by a hostile crowd. The guards did attempt to protect us and to move us

as quickly as possible through the mob who were throwing stones and any available debris. I was thoroughly dehydrated, but we were prodded past a water spigot too fast for me to grab even a drop of water. Some lucky prisoners managed to drink a moment before being driven off.

Our next train was little better than previous ones. I

was beginning to hallucinate from thirst. It was so intense that I have little recollection of the remainder of the trip to Aomori at the northern tip of Honshu, the ferry terminal to Hakodate on Hokkaido. At one point the train stopped and many men were taken off, we later learned, to work in the mines. At Aomori, while we waited for the ferry, we were given time to get water and clean up a bit. The trip to Hakodate was brief. We learned later that on its very next trip, the ferry was sunk by American planes.

The train trip from Hakodate north along the coast to Sapporo and then inland to the mountainous center of the island at Nishi Ashibetsu was uneventful, except for the temperatures. It was early July but the nights were cold.

The officers were separated from the men and we were taken to a small low wooden building where we found some Australian officers already in residence. We learned that we were to work at a coal mine. Our protests at first were successful. The camp commander received instructions that our rations were to be cut below starvation levels as long as we refused to work. Then we were told that we would work only topside at the mine, shoveling gravel, etc. The Australians were most anxious about our tendency to

resist and sabotage every Jap effort to work us. They preferred to follow the line of least trouble. They argued that we must work to receive enough food to survive. We could only attribute their willingness to abide by Jap orders to possible previous severe privations; among POWs it is difficult to determine who has suffered the most. Finally, more to placate the Aussies than the Japs, we went to work. It would be more exact to say we went to the place of work; once there, we became as adept at shovel leaning as any member of the W.P.A. An occasional gesture by a guard with a bayonet brought arguments about being too weak to work until the bayonet became too agitated to warrant ignoring it further. The Japs tried to set work norms, above which we were promised an added percentage of rations. The Aussies again tried to gain our compliance, their faith in the integrity of the Japs far exceeded ours. We knew from past experience with the Fuji project that as higher production levels were achieved then those levels became the norm.

From the very beginning we had been receiving, in accordance with the Geneva Convention, pay in yen according to rank. It was obvious that Jap officers must have received most of

their pay in fringe benefits which we did not receive. In any event, the yen brought little satisfaction since there was nothing to spend it on. We had each accumulated a wad of unspent yen. Now the Japs proposed a one time deal; if we gave them all our yen, they would bring us something for it. We had nothing to lose; a huge pile of paper yen was given to the Japs. A few days later a box of two cubic feet in volume was brought in. It had a strong odor and when the top was lifted, there was some sliced, dried cuttlefish shreds. Each of us received a bowl full, about twelve ounces. Any attempt to eat it as a meal would have been disastrous. We put three or four shreds into each bowl of rice and thereby gained some of the protein nourishment we had been lacking. None was wasted; the dried eyes were considered a particularly chewy delicacy.

One night four of us were awakened and given burlap sacks. We followed the guard across town to a building which was the slaughter house for old horses. We went at night because the locals would have been irate to see American prisoners receiving what they considered to be rightfully theirs. However, they would have had little cause for jealousy for all we were given were well scraped bones.

These served for three meals. In the first, the bones were boiled with fuki to provide a weak broth. At the second, the bones were cracked with an ax and again boiled with fuki. At the third serving, the bones themselves were distributed for gnawing at such gristle as yet remained.

Fuki was a bland root plant that looked like rhubarb and grew wild. We were sent out on expeditions in the countryside to gather it for drying in the sun to store for winter use. It had little nourishment value if one judged by its taste. It was the main component of what passed for our stew. On one trip for fuki, we rode a very small mountain railway through a very beautiful area, sometimes passing over deep valleys, hundreds of feet below. As we searched along a sparkling mountain stream, we came upon a pool of water where a huge iron cauldron had been set up over a fire. The lone fisherman tending the pot gave each of us a small bowl of the most delicious fish chowder I had ever tasted. We were profuse in our thanks and he equally happy at our appreciation.

We were told that we must prepare to feed ourselves by farming. We were given a small plot on a very rocky hillside with a bag of buckwheat seed and two hoes. It was obvious that

If we were to survive the winter, it would not be through the crop of buckwheat we would harvest. As we planted, we tried to crush some of the seed between our teeth to gain a little nourishment from that, but our tongues were unable to sort out the hulls. Fortunately we did not become dependent upon our buckwheat harvest.

On two trips to the "farm", our guards returned to camp by way of a river where we were given freedom to swim. The mountain waters were icy but we endured the discomfort for the elation of feeling free. The guard stood on the bank with his rifle and a big smile. The guards were taking a less strict attitude. One even told us we would be going home soon. This was difficult to rationalize with their previous statements of fighting to the last man and woman. There was a laxity in discipline; the guards would mix a bucket of rice, water and sugar, then put it near a stove overnight. The next day they ate the fermented rice and became drunk. At times they were drunk on duty and it required considerable diplomacy to avoid their drunken rages.

One afternoon we passed a column of British prisoners one of whom, out of the corner of his mouth, muttered, "Did ye hear, 'Hojo' is in?" When we got back to camp we tried to

remember any member of the Jap government named Hojo. We knew Hojo was gone and several others had served briefly as prime minister. Then someone with an ear for the British accent realized that what had been told us was, "Old Joe is in." Old Joe was Stalin. Our conjecture was verified the next day when we observed some children playing at shooting in the air with sticks as they said something like "Pusski is Kokie".

Our work at the mine continued but with little enthusiasm on the part of the Japs. There was no pressure to produce. The only ones who seemed oblivious of what was in the air was a group of six Korean laborers; four small men and two large women dressed in baggy trousers and heavy cotton jackets. They were unloading mine timbers from a railway car. Two men stood at the ends of the car and, as one woman sidled up to the middle of the car, the men lifted a timber onto the woman's shoulder. She then moved majestically away to deposit it in a new location. They worked with the precision, if not the alacrity, of ants. We wearily continued to shovel gravel from one spot to another, and, when the guards were not looking, to shovel it back again, all in slow motion.

Then, one day we were told there would be no work, but we must stay in the barracks. We had seen a radio being

carried into the headquarters; a radio was a luxury to be used on very special occasions. The reason for our confinement to barracks became apparent when we realized there were no guards about. They were all in the headquarters. They were listening to the Emperor's Rescript. Soon after, a large amount of soy bean meal was brought to our galley. The guards were quiet but occasionally one would talk about our going home soon.

We were invited to send representatives to a dinner being given by the mining company. On the way we passed groups of children who bowed with respect; only the day before as we marched along the street, these children had spit and thrown pebbles at us. The adherence of the people to authority, even in defeat, was very remarkable. At the dinner of potatoes, pickled turnips and saki, we were treated to speeches in praise of peace.

We were invited to assemble in the rear of the barracks to hear a major from Imperial Headquarters. He gave us the official word on the end of the war. Then we learned from him of the atomic bomb. At the time we did not comprehend the enormity of this weapon. The major alluded to it as a weapon in the moral category of poison gas. We were unimpressed by his moralizing.

The camp commander gave each of us a carved wooden

bear, a souvenir made by the Ainu people of Hokkaido. The Ainu were the original inhabitants of the island but were now thoroughly subjugated by the Japs in a manner far more severe than has been the fate of the American Indian. I still have the bear, not to remind me of the good will of a Jap officer but as a symbol of the oppression they brought to all conquered peoples.

On the following morning we awoke to find no guard; their rifles were stacked outside and we were on our own. Three of us, Barniger, Lewis and I went for a walk through the town. Everyone in the town remained in their houses at our approach. As we stood outside the open window of a house, the radio was on and we heard the voice of General Michelberger advising all POWs to stay put until provision could be made for their repatriation. We were told to paint big "PW's" on the roof of our barracks and we would receive drops of supplies by plane. We duly reported this news at camp, somebody found some yellow paint and we awaited the arrival of food supplies.

The planes were not long in coming. The first drops came by parachute. Retrieval was easy because the parachutes could be seen coming down. However, they must have run out of parachutes and we began to receive 50 gallon drums of

supplies in free falls. This was a more hazardous situation than when we were being bombed. At least we knew what to expect from an enemy.

On the first day of drops, we were disappointed to find very little food. There were at least two pair of heavy boots per man, six years supply of shoe laces if you didn't wait for them to wear out, enough soap to make up for all the baths we'd not had in four years and enough chewing gum to satisfy the cravings of all the begging kids of Nisi Ashibetsu. But no food.

On the morrow we received quantities of candy. In the meanwhile, Barninger, Lewis and I started hiking the pathways into the hilly countryside. Soap was scarce in Japan and so we filled our pockets with soap to barter for eggs and chickens. Then finally drops were made of canned rations. We spent most of our time either eating or thinking about it. I gained a pound a day until later, when I reached home, I was almost back to normal weight.

Finally a young army doctor arrived with a train to take us to Sapporo, from where we flew to Tokyo and then back home.

It was years before I lost the intense desire to hoard

any food, candy or soap that I found. Even though I was not hungry, I would stuff a package of crackers in my pocket — just in case. I even stored dozens of cakes of soap — just in case. I had fantasized about hot cakes made with pure cream. I made them just once. My wife was amazed at my breakfast of pie-a-la mode with root beer. I had learned to appreciate all food; those foods I disdained before the war, I found to be delicious. When I was invited to dinner and the hostess had rice on the menu, I could quite truthfully allay her embarrassment — I never had enough rice.

On our return home, we found that many Americans who had never heard an angry bullet were the most profound haters of the Japs and Germans. Most of us were so happy to be back in America we had little room. We POWs realized better that many of the actions taken by our enemies, cruel and barbarous, were the result of their culture. We were willing to try to understand their motivations and, to that extent, forgive. But we can never forget. I cannot really ~~pardon~~ the Japanese because I don't believe they like us or want to.

During our nearly four years of imprisonment, we

often discussed our misfortune as trained professionals to be so ineffective and lost to the war effort. It was very frustrating. Our only consolation was that if it had not been us, it would have been someone else. We had done our best when we had the opportunity. Semper Paratus.